



THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL;

WITH REMINISCENCES OF AN

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

BY AN EX-PRESIDING ELDER.



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## REFACE

The author of this book will not assume a "voluntary humility" by apologizing to the reader for his want of ability as a fluent and graphic writer. He has only such talents as the God of Grace and Providence has seen proper to indue him with. His most cherished desire is to improve them, so as to have a pure conscience for his own enjoyment and be useful to his fellow-man. To contribute something toward keeping the itinerant system of preaching "the gospel of our salvation" in all directions—as practiced by the great and growing Methodist connection in every quarter of the globe—pure and efficient, is an object worthy the pious labors of any Christian. Believing that some good, under the blessing of God—may be accomplished in that direction, by giving publicity to what has hitherto been considered the unwritten history of a part of the system of Methodist itinerancy, the author has undertaken the task. In doing this his constant care has been to adhere rigidly to the truth, so as neither to disparage or overestimate any of the characters taken in hand. The work is intended, not merely for innocent entertainment, but for the solid and lasting benefit of the whole itinerant corps connected with the many ecclesiastical jurisdictions of the one great and doctrinally-united Methodist Episcopal Church. In view of this object, no Conference is

mentioned as the locality where the narrated transactions took place, and all the names of persons and places are assumed. The scene is laid in the Southern States, not only because the author has lived and labored there for forty years, and is, personally, better acquainted with the plan of itinerant preaching there than elsewhere, but also because it has given him the opportunity of introducing, occasionally, an important class of pastoral charges not to be found anywhere else. The writer has been familiar with the Council Chamber of the Bishops for more than thirty years, where the various pastoral charges are carefully reviewed and adjusted, and the appointments of all the effective itinerant preachers made out for the ensuing year, and where he has, at one time or another, come in contact with the various incidents and characters brought to view in the following narrative. This is not a book of fiction, but of facts; not of extreme or unusual cases, but those of the most common occurrence. In conclusion, the author may be permitted to say, as the accumulating infirmities of old age have put a period to his active itinerancy, he proposes to cheer his partial retirement by an attempt to write for the Church; and if any good shall be accomplished in this way, through his instrumentality, he will have cause of sincere gratitude to God.

THE AUTHOR.

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# THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL ;

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## CHAPTER 1.

Advantages of an Itinerate Pastorate—How Our Ministers are Obtained and Trained for the Work—Advantages of a General Character to Ministers and People.

Before giving an account of the first meeting of the Bishop's Council, as hereinafter set forth, the attention of the reader is called to some of the most prominent advantages, both to the ministers and people, of our itinerant plan of preaching the saving doctrines, and administering the ordinances and discipline of the Gospel of Christ, over that of any other now extant in Christendom. That there are some minor disadvantages connected with it we are ready to admit, and that some concessions of feeling and individual interests have to be made by both parties, in order to keep the system pure and in good working condition, is a well known fact; but these trivial disadvantages and concessions dwindle into insignificance when compared with the efficiency of the plan in accomplishing the contemplated good, everywhere, among the masses of the

people within its range. The theory of Methodist itinerancy is, that "the world is its parish"—that all men everywhere have a claim on its benevolent and Christ-like efforts to do them good, and that its work should never cease until "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Before we look, somewhat in detail, at the advantages of this extraordinary system of itinerant preaching in order to evangelize the world, let us pause a moment, and contemplate the original sources of its power. And, first of all, we bow with reverent submission to the Scriptural doctrine, that the Supreme Head of the Church has reserved to himself the inalienable right to select and call whom he will to preach the Gospel; and hence, when laborers are needed, we pray the Lord of the harvest to send them out. Secondly, that God calls no unconverted man to enter upon the work of the ministry, while yet in an unconverted state, and, in view of this, we require all who profess to be "inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel" to answer affirmatively the following questions: "Do you know God as a pardoning God? Have you the love of God abiding in you? Do you desire nothing but God? Are you holy in all manner of conversation?" If, in addition to these indispensable pre-requisites, they have orthodox conceptions of the plan of salvation, with ability to speak justly, readily and clearly, we admit them into the probationary state of the Gospel ministry. Now let us see the advantages of our itinerant plan to the preachers themselves. Being first duly recommended by the Church where they hold their membership to the Quarterly Conference of the charge in which

they live, where they undergo a suitable examination as to their Christian experience, talents and prospective usefulness, they are licensed to preach, and granted a recommendation to the Annual Conference, where, after due examination, they are admitted into the probationary class of itinerant preachers. A well-selected literary and theological course of study, judiciously divided into quadrennial sections, is immediately put into their hands, which they are authoritatively required to pursue four consecutive years, at least; having to undergo an examination at the end of each year, in order to ascertain their progress.

This course of original training is of itself an advantage not to be lightly esteemed. If the under-graduates in the itinerancy are true to their obligations in mastering this course of study, and the Conference in refusing to advance them until they do so, it secures to them, at the end of their probation, a fair standing as scholars and theologians, in addition to a mind well trained to close investigation, which prepares them to prosecute other useful studies through life. Another advantage connected with our plan of ministerial training grows out of the fact that our prospective ministers are put to work simultaneously with the commencement of their Conference course of study, so that theory and practice go hand in hand. What they learn they have immediate use for, and by using it in the composition and delivery of their sermons, they stereotype it in their minds so that it is not readily forgotten.

Again, these incipient itinerants are always put under the observation and preceptorship of experienced seniors, acting as preachers in charge, or Presiding

Elders, whose duty it is to point out and correct whatever they see wrong, either in their language or gestures in the pulpit, or in their general behavior in their intercourse with society, so that if they have not mistaken their calling and will be diligent in it, they can not fail to improve rapidly in every branch of ministerial education. Another advantage accruing to our young students of divinity from our practical manner of training is, that having a number of congregations remote from each other to serve, and being removed at the end of one, or at the most, of two years to a new field of labor, they can use the same discourses repeatedly, with such emendations and additions as experience may suggest, until they attain as much perfection as we usually find even in written sermons. A final advantage arising to our young itinerants out of primary ministerial training is, that they are generally placed in circumstances that almost entirely preclude the possibility of reading their sermons from a manuscript previously prepared, so that one of the first practical lessons they learn is to speak extemporaneously, and they soon become such adepts in this mode of speaking, that to confine them to a manuscript would be to impose on them a grievous yoke of bondage. The consequence is they become ready workmen, prepared at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, to preach the Gospel to every grade of society; whereas some who allow themselves to speak disparagingly of the talents of our preachers, and arrogantly of their own superior literary and theological training, if they are called on to preach when they have no manuscript on hand, find themselves unable to comply with the

request. There are many other advantages of a general character common to ministers of every grade and variety of talents, indissolubly intertwined with the itinerant mode of preaching the Gospel as practiced by the Methodist Episcopal Church. One is that the annual or biennial interchange of preachers insures to the different charges, sooner or later, the advantages of every variety of talent in the ministry. Now they have a logician to defend the Church from assailants, and to indoctrinate the young members; next year, perhaps, a declaimer to arouse them to the active duties of Christianity; here a son of thunder to awaken; there a son of consolation to lead them to Christ; this year a revivalist to bring members into Church fellowship, and the next an experienced disciplinarian to train them up to holiness and usefulness. And then the adventitious circumstances of every community, from the overwrought refinements of city life to the primitive simplicity of frontier settlements, can be accommodated with suitable pastors. If it is found that the talents, habits or idiosyncracies of a man render him unsuitable for some localities, he can be transferred to others where he can be acceptable and useful. If new settlements are formed, or new countries opened for the introduction of the Gospel, our itinerant system has the men ready at once to enter the new field and commence the organization of Churches. In the settlement of the Western Territories and the various bodies of land acquired from the aboriginal tribes, we have frequently noticed our superior advantages, in this respect, over our sister Churches. While their ministers are waiting for a call, looking for a

eligible location, or arranging the preliminaries for an adequate salary, we send our ready itinerants regardless of all these considerations; and being the first to look after the spiritual interests of the people in their new homes, they are apt to be retained as their pastors afterward.

Notwithstanding the voluntary and often self-interested condolence of those in other communions with our people, on account of the perpetual change of their pastors, the Methodist laity are very generally as much in favor of the system as our ministers are. They are able to see for themselves that it is the most efficient system in christendom for preaching the Gospel everywhere, and spreading Scriptural holiness throughout the earth. They are able to appreciate the fact demonstrated by statistical enumeration, that under its operation the Church of their choice, within the past hundred years, has vastly outgrown any other in the land. And as they also endorse the doctrine that "the world is our parish," and believe that the vast machinery of the Church should be worked in view of the subjugation of all men everywhere to the Gospel of Christ, they are willing, as a part of their contribution to the glorious and much-desired achievement, to sacrifice their personal feelings and preferences in such an interchange of their pastors as promises the greatest amount of good to the greatest number of redeemed souls. From their first entrance into the Church they have been practically trained to this annual or biennial change of pastors, so that they now expect it as a matter of course, and their feelings, as well as principles, are adjusted to meet it. By submitting to it they become personally

acquainted with a much greater number of their ministers than any other Church in the land, and, consequently, enjoy a greater variety of preaching. If they have been signally benefitted by the labors of their pastor one or two years, they are willing that others—united with them in doctrine, Church government and Christian communion—should enjoy similar benefits. They often see members of their own households, as well as beloved neighbors who had neglected the Gospel call heretofore, brought into the Church, and into the enjoyment of salvation from sin, through the instrumentality of the newly-installed pastor, and they thank God for sending him. If they have, at times, a pastor not so well qualified by grace, wisdom, prudence and zeal for usefulness as they could desire, they submit to the inconvenience the more cheerfully, because they know he will be removed at the end of one, or two years at most, without the mortification on their part of having to ask for it. Then they are not troubled about hunting for and experimenting with preachers in the way of trial sermons to get one to suit everybody. They know that under our system of supplying every charge with a preacher, that from every Annual Conference a pastor will be sent to them of at least respectable piety, talents and promise of usefulness. Another advantage to the people of our itinerant plan is, that every pastoral charge entered on the minutes, whether station, circuit or mission, as a general rule, is sure of a preacher, whether they are able so support him or not. This can not be so confidently affirmed of our sister denominations, for while, with a few exceptions, they are almost as constantly changing pastors as we

are, we not unfrequently find their Churches left for months, and even years, without a regular pastor. But enough has been said on this subject. We believe our plan is Providential; our members and congregations are well satisfied with it, and we expect to adhere to it in all time to come.

## CHAPTER II.

Moving Scenes at the Opening of Conference—Committees Appointed and Business Promptly Entered Upon—Preachers Received and Rejected—Probationers Continued and Discontinued—Incidents at the Close of the First Daily Session—First Meeting of the Bishop's Council—William Ransom Suggests the Remodeling of the Districts—The Members of the Council all Arrive—The Bishop's Prayer, and Counsel to the Presiding Elders—Revision of Pastoral Charges—Trouble with a Small Station—Dividing a Large Circuit for Good Reasons—Difference of Opinion about Naming New Circuits.

The Conference assembled in the flourishing and hospitable town of Cherryville, late in the autumn. The Bishop and most of the ministers arrived in town the evening before. Some came by public, but most of them by private conveyance, and in companies ranging from two or three to eight or ten. Some of them looked quite emaciated and travel-worn, but when they met at the door of the Conference room their greetings were unusually cheerful, and their joy at their annual re-union seemed to be universal. The Bishop entered the Conference room at nine o'clock in the morning, and, after kneeling a few moments in silent prayer, took his seat at the desk assigned him. A few taps with his pocket-knife on the desk brought the Conference to order, and he proceeded to read, in a manly voice, the fourth chapter of the second epistle to Timothy, and gave out, two lines at a time, the hymn commencing,

“And are we yet alive,”

which was sung with great earnestness by the preachers.

The singing was peculiar to a Methodist Annual Conference. Except the voices of a few ladies who came in early to join in the devotional exercises at the opening

of the session, nothing was to be heard in singing the hymn but the stentorian notes of near a hundred men. The hearts of the preachers were warmed and mellowed by the appropriate sentiments of the hymn, and before it was finished tears of joy and gratitude fell rapidly from many eyes. The Bishop felt the holy influence which accompanied the hymn, and he had occasion to remove his spectacles and apply his handkerchief, while his lips quivered and his voice trembled with emotion as he gave out the concluding stanzas. Two or three brethren, perhaps more emotional by nature than others, shouted "glory to God!" outright, to which no one felt inclined to object. The reading of the Holy Scriptures, and the melody of hearts as well as voices that accompanied the hymn, evidently contributed to the fervor and appropriateness of the prayer that followed. I had heard the Bishop lead in prayer often, but on this occasion he seemed to excel both in fervor and appropriate language. He gave thanks to Almighty God for preserving the health and lives of the preachers generally; for restoring a few who had been dangerously sick; for the assurance of faith enjoyed by the three who had died at their posts during the year; for having brought us so safely through the trials and conflicts of another varied year; for the success that had so generally crowned our labors, as shown by the revival notices in our Conference *Christian Advocate*; then followed an humble confession of our unworthiness, our many imperfections, and our incidental delinquencies in ministerial fidelity and duty, and an earnest petition that we might be freely and fully forgiven for the sake of our Redeemer and Mediator, and be pre-

pared at once to enter upon the solemn duties of our annual convocation. Then followed a prayer that the great Shepherd of Israel would watch over and preserve all the members of our recent charges during the absence of their pastors; that they might not fall into sin and be led astray by false teaching. Next came in remembrance the homes and families of the preachers. O how tenderly did our venerable Superintendent pray for our wives, and children, and servants, that they might be preserved from accidents, sickness and death during our absence; that those who had not been converted might in due time be brought into the household of faith; that all might be built up in Gospel holiness, and be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time!" He closed by humbly invoking the manifested presence and direction of God in all our deliberations. Many and hearty were the responses of the preachers, and the final amen seemed to make the very air vibrate. The Bishop then delivered a short, but very appropriate address to the preachers, as to the Christian spirit in which they should conduct all their discussions; the courteous and gentlemanly bearing that should characterize all their intercourse with each other; and the ministerial sobriety and dignity they should uniformly maintain in the presence of all observers. The roll was then called, and not only a quorum, but a very large majority of all the members were present. A secretary was elected, and the usual standing committees, with two or three for special purposes, were appointed; the hours for meeting and adjournment were fixed, and in a few minutes the

Conference was engaged as deliberately in its regular business as if it had only adjourned the day before. Nothing of any special interest came up for discussion on the first day, apart from the admission of candidates into the traveling connection, and examining and passing a few of the under-graduates. After a free discussion, two of the applicants for admission were rejected. One for his want of a suitable rudimental education, in connection with the appearance of a sort of self-conceit and forwardness wholly unbecoming any minister of the meek and holy Savior, and especially such an unfledged upstart as he seemed to be. If the Quarterly Conference knew him, as they ought to know every man they recommend, they did both him and the Church great injustice in recommending him to the Annual Conference. How inconsistent it appears for a Quarterly Conference to recommend a man "as a suitable person to be received into the traveling connection" when they ought to know he is wholly *unsuitable*, and when they would be very unwilling to have such a preacher sent to their circuit! But he is old brother so and so's son or son-in-law, and the Quarterly Conference will not reject his application for fear of hurting feelings; but expose him to a much worse fate by sending him to the Annual Conference to be canvassed and rejected there! The other was rejected on account of his limited talents, his age and the size of his family. It was evidently a matter of serious doubt whether, at his late period in life, he ever could attain a respectable mediocrity as a preacher, and it was thought no circuit would be willing to receive him and support his large family with such a poor prospect of effective usefulness.

Of the thirteen admitted at our last Conference, eleven, after a sifting examination by both committee and Conference, passed, with commendatory remarks from their seniors and presiding Elders. The other two were discontinued—one at his own earnest request. After trying the itinerancy a year, he seemed to be well satisfied that either the work did not suit him, or he did not suit it, and it was best for all concerned for him to retire. The other was dropped by a vote of the Conference. The complaints against him were “that he was indolent in his studies; light and trifling in his conversation; was addicted to telling foolish and common-place anecdotes; joking with the young people about matrimonial matters; had already got into a foolish but unsuccessful courtship; wanted too much waiting on, and was unnecessarily troublesome to the families where he stayed; and, finally, was excessively egotistic, and did not receive kindly the well-intended admonitions of his elder brethren, and consequently did not improve by them; and that he was a very indifferent preacher at best, with but little prospect of improvement.” When voting time came I could but notice how quick the old veterans raised their hands for his discontinuance. A brother of sound judgment, but somewhat quaint in his expressions, who sat near me, remarked in an under tone, “that there wasn’t timber enough in that young man to make an itinerant Methodist preacher out of, and he wouldn’t do no how.”

The hour of adjournment having come, the first one named on each committee being considered its chairman for the present, announced the time and place of its first meeting. The Committee on Public Worship pub-

lished their plan for religious services for all the Churches in Cherryville during the Conference, except the Protestant Episcopal Church, and a small Roman Catholic place of worship ; after which the Bishop notified the Presiding Elders to meet him at his room at Colonel Warham's, at half past three o'clock, P. M. Then, for the sake of punctuality in all their meetings, the Bishop inquired for the town time, and requested all the preachers to set their watches with it, and to remember the tenth rule, which says, "Be punctual ; do everything exactly at the time."

Through the kindness of the pastor, and the official board of our Church in Cherryville, I was assigned to Colonel Warham's, and occupied a room next door to the Bishop's. Soon after dinner he asked me to walk into his room, and by his suggestion we closed the door, and spent a few moments in silent prayer. He then said to me, as I would be convenient to him at all hours during the intervals of Conference, he wished me to act as his private secretary, and assist in keeping, and finally in perfecting his minutes for publication. I readily complied with his request, not only from a desire to assist our good Bishop in his arduous task, but also because the position gave me an opportunity of preserving my rough memoranda, which I have found very serviceable in the compilation of this book. "But," said the Bishop, "brother Howe, you must keep the secrets of the Council carefully locked up, when not in hand, until our plans are perfected, and the appointments officially announced." I replied that I had a good lock to my valise, and nothing should transpire, through me, until the proper time. We had barely

inished this preliminary arrangement before footsteps were heard coming up the stairway, which were quickly succeeded by a gentle rap at the door. "Come in," said the Bishop, and brother William Ransom, late Presiding Elder of the Middle River District, and brother Randall Cardin, of Sandy Hill District, entered. "In good time," said the Bishop; "I was not expecting the pleasure of your company so soon to-day—thought, after a year's separation from your fellow-laborers, you would probably wish to spend every leisure moment, for a day or so, in social converse with them, inquiring after and hearing from old friends scattered here and there over the Conference." Brother Ransom replied, "Business first and pleasure afterward, Bishop. I thought this would be the most favorable time, before we review the districts, to suggest that several of them ought to be re-modeled, so as to equalize upon equitable principles the labor and support of the Presiding Elders. My term of service on the Middle River District now closes by limitation, and my health and strength are so reduced by long rides, preaching Presiding Elder sermons, and other heavy duties, that I hope to be excused from serving on a district any more, at least until I recover. As it is my earnest wish to return to the circuit work, where there will not be such wasting responsibilities and excessive labors, therefore, I trust no one will think I have any personal interest in this matter." "To think that, brother Ransom," remarked the Bishop, "would be to think contrary to the facts of your whole previous history as a minister. I presume you need not fear that any one will accuse you of being selfish in suggesting an equitable arrangement of the districts.

The Apostle Paul says, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, 'For I mean not that other men shall be eased and ye burdened, but that there may be *equality*.' Equality among brethren, then, is the Scriptural rule. 'Proceed, brother.' Brother Ransom resumed: "Some of the districts, regardless of geographical symmetry, are laid off so as to include several important city and town stations with the compact and wealthy circuits, while others—such as Sandy Hill; Black Peak and Pine-ville districts—are laid off so as to include, almost exclusively, the poorest and largest circuits and missions in the Conference, with large tracts of uninhabited and uninhabitable mountains and sand hills interspersed here and there between them. The practical results of this injudicious, not to say unrighteous, arrangement is, that the Presiding Elders on the wealthy and compact districts have short rides, over good roads, fine churches, large congregations, good accommodations, and full salaries, with the privilege of spending several days of every week with their families; while those on the poor and scattered districts, composed of large circuits in territory, but pecuniarily very weak, have long rides over bad roads, ferryless and bridgeless creeks and rivers, to preach in indifferent churches, to small congregations, with poor accommodations, and poorer salaries, and having often to be absent from their families from three to six weeks at a time. To all these facts brother Cardin can testify, from lessons taught in the school of bitter experience." Brother Cardin, with a few pertinent remarks, confirmed all that brother Ransom had said. The Bishop seemed to be absorbed in thought a few moments, and then replied: "The dis-

tricts must be arranged more equitably, brethren, but in the meantime you must not complain too much of the brethren who have been traveling the wealthy and compact districts, nor of my worthy predecessors for permitting them to retain their present form. Perhaps no one heretofore has insisted on, or even suggested, the changes you now wish made. And, moreover, your Conference has been hitherto in a formative state, having been gradually extended over the new territory acquired from the Indians within the last twenty or thirty years. But now your whole territory is occupied by a network of pastoral charges, and, I think, you may put your districts in an equitable and permanent form. I would suggest that when the subject of the districts comes up in due course, that you appoint a committee of three of your most judicious and experienced Presiding Elders, who are personally cognizant of all the facts in the case, to draw up a draft of the districts as they should be hereafter, and submit it to the Council for emendation, if necessary, and confirmation. You may safely request one or two of your ex-Presiding Elders to assist you in this matter—for instance, my old friend, Robert Cole, whose counsel you ought to seek in all difficult cases. But it is now half-past three, and here come the brethren."

The Bishop advanced to the door, and gave each of the four brethren just arrived a cordial shake of the hand, and invited them to be seated. The door being closed, and the brethren all being seated, the Bishop said, with deep solemnity, that, "as we are about to engage in a work involving great responsibilities and interests as undying as eternity, we should, first of

all, kneel in supplication for the wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” The Bishop then led in prayer, which was appropriate, feeling and suggestive. \* He touchingly confessed our native weaknesses and proneness to err ; alluded to our responsible positions and the immortal interests involved in our task ; then invoked the manifested presence of the Holy Ghost to guide us into all truth. He rejoiced to know that God loved and cared for all his people ; that he was well acquainted with all their wants ; that he was equally acquainted with the talents and providential circumstances of all the preachers ; and he prayed fervently that in the end every one might be appointed where he would live most holy and be most useful. After prayer the Bishop remarked “ that we had a tedious work before us ; one that would require the exercise of all the grace and wisdom we could command. Seven districts and seventy or eighty circuits, stations and missions to arrange and re-arrange, with more than a hundred preachers, variously circumstanced, and possessing every variety of ministerial talent, to appoint to appropriate fields of labor for the ensuing year. We should ‘ pray without ceasing ’ to Him ‘ in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,’ that we ~~may~~ be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.”

The Presiding Elders now drew up around a centre table, and several of them opened their portfolios, sharpened their pencils and prepared for writing. “ I have no objection,” said the Bishop, “ to your taking notes

and making memorandums, provided you will keep them from the eyes of all observers outside of this Council. And let me remind you that you are not to speak of anything said or done here, except to each other, until the appointments are read out at the conclusion of the Conference, unless by permission in some special case. I am glad to know that most of our preachers, having engaged in this holy work from a sense of duty, are willing quietly to repose their destiny for the coming year in our hands; believing that we will do the best we can both for them and the general interest of the great work in which we are engaged; but we have a few restless spirits among us, whose anxiety about their appointments will increase as the Conference advances, and who will be listening, and guessing, and trying to get some hint beforehand as to their field of ministerial labor. But you know, brethren, that we shall be making changes until the close of our last sitting. There will be re-admissions, locations, superannuations, and, perhaps, some agencies to fill, which will require us to take up men already down; and *that* will lead to sundry other changes. And then a careful review of the whole matter, at our final meeting, may suggest several transpositions for the better, and it would be wrong to annoy or mislead the preachers beforehand by telling them anything about our plan, which, at best, is only in a state of progress toward a final settlement. We will now call over the districts, beginning at Cherryville and finishing at Pineville, in order, first, to revise the different pastoral charges. It may be necessary, in some cases, to unite two charges in one—or make two or more of one, or form new ones 'in the

regions beyond.' When the name of a district is called, the Presiding Elder of the previous year will please represent it." The Bishop continued, "Brother Reedum, what changes, if any, do you wish made in the Cherryville District?" "None, sir," replied Brother Reedum. "I am satisfied with my work as it is."

The name of Rich Valley District was then called by the Bishop, and he inquired, "What have you to say, Brother Hartford, about changes in your district?" Brother Hartford rose to his feet and said: "Mr. President, at our last Conference we detached the village of Burlington from Burlington Circuit, at the earnest solicitation of several leading members of the village, who said they wanted a stationed preacher there, so that they could have preaching every Sabbath at 11 o'clock, and again at night, in addition to an afternoon service for the colored people; and that they might always have the preacher on hand to take the superintendence of their Sabbath school; to lead their class and prayer-meetings, visit their sick, bury their dead, and to look about generally after all the interests of the Church. They insisted, however, that we must send them a man of very respectable talents as a preacher; and that he must be a single man or a man with no family but a wife, as they had no parsonage and were not able to support a minister with much of a family. Well, sir, in compliance with this request, we made Burlington a station, and appointed as its Pastor David Mann, one of the best preachers of his age in the Conference, with no family but his little, innocent, pious wife. When he got there he stopped, without any special invitation, at Brother Goldbury's, and after visit-

ing the leading members several days in succession, ultimately succeeded in getting them together to consult about where he was to board, and how his necessary expenses were to be met at maturity. They all pretended to be anxious to do something, but complained of inability, and several thought they had better adjourn over a week or two to give time for reflection about the matter. Brother Mann reminded them that he was there in obedience to the behest of his superiors, who, he understood, had sent him there in compliance with their expressed wishes, and he desired them to act promptly in this matter, so that he could enter at once upon his year's work, with his mind unembarrassed. Brother Goldbury said he could not board him; that he had just the day before engaged to board the principal of the male school, who had a wife and two children; and in that case he would have no trouble in getting his pay, as the most of it would be paid in the tuition of his sons. Brother Kennardson said he could not board him, though the brethren seemed to think he ought, because he had a large house and a small family, which was true; but he had a good deal of company at times, and when his friends came to spend a day or two with him he did not want any body there in the way. And so they all had some special reason why they could not board the preacher and his wife. Finally, they called in a poor brother by the name of Inman, with a large family, who lived in a little old house on the flat near the bayou, and asked him if he could board the preacher and his wife. Brother Inman replied that he was not in circumstances to board any body as it ought to be done, but if they could do no better he would take

them, and furnish them with boarding, including washing and lodging, for twenty-eight dollars per month. Brother Littleman said he thought sister Mann might relieve them from the bill of washing, by washing for herself; but several said no, let the washing be included in the bill of boarding. With mortified feelings brother Mann submitted to the new arrangement, and next morning moved to his new home, and tried to enter upon his work with a cheerful heart, hoping for a change for the better when the people got better acquainted with him. He soon found that brother Inman's house was so small, and his family so large, and his children so noisy, that there was no chance to read, write, or even pray, with any sort of composure, about the premises. The children made playthings of his books, and besmeared his papers and manuscripts with ink, until he was afraid to leave anything in their sight. When the Quarterly Conference met and organized, a few weeks after, he told the stewards and other official members that he must have a room somewhere in town, where he could keep his books and papers conveniently, and where he could retire and be alone a part of every day, in order to pray, read, write and study his sermons. That having to preach three times a week in addition to several exhortations at the class and prayer-meetings, he could not sustain himself through the year without better opportunities for preparation than he had been favored with up to that date. But no one knew where a room could be obtained, and several said they could not incur the additional expense of renting him an office—that they did not want a preacher to shut himself up in a room to read books and write sermons; they wanted

him out among the people, getting acquainted with them, and talking to them about religion. It was in vain that brother Mann called their attention to the fact that reading and study were important and obligatory branches of ministerial duty, not only enjoined in the Rules of the Church, but also in the Holy Scriptures. They didn't see it in that light; and, moreover, they didn't want him there to study, but to work for the church. So he got no room, and had to do most of his praying and reading in the woods up the bayou, in the midst of many disturbances by passers by, or at his boarding-house when others were asleep. The Church made large demands on his services. Not only had he to be class-leader, hold all the prayer-meetings, superintend the Sabbath school, in addition to teaching the Bible class, but he was expected to superintend all the improvements about the Church lot, and to collect the money to pay for them; and even to collect the ten dollars to pay the sexton for sweeping and lighting the church. Brother Mann says the happiest time he had during the year, was when they proposed to excuse him for three Sabbaths, provided he would go to the country and collect a hundred dollars to pay for the new fence around the church, and some arrearages for aid used in lighting it up at night. He says himself and wife had a perfect jubilee at the camp-meeting on one of his former circuits, and at the quarterly meetings on Salem and Franklin circuits."

"But did he get the hundred dollars?" inquired brother Jackson Innis, of Black's Peak District.

"Got it! Yes, sir, and more too," answered brother Hartford. "They know how to appreciate such a

preacher as David Mann out there. Well, Mr. President," again directing his attention to the Bishop, "to sum up all in a few words, brother Mann just had to worry through the year in that way, and though he preached nearly ninety sermons to the white congregation, besides one almost every Sabbath afternoon to the colored people, and attended faithfully to all his other pastoral duties, in addition to being their collecting agent for almost everything that money was needed for, when he met the stewards for a final settlement he found they lacked one hundred and sixty dollars of having enough to pay his limited salary; and the most of this deficiency being on the score of boarding, and brother Inman being, as he said, greatly in need of the money, he had to send to the country for his horse, where he had been kept by a friend without charge, and sell him to raise the money. So that he comes away from Burlington a poorer man, by the value of his horse, than when he went there; and, sir, I can not think of throwing away the zeal and talents of such a preacher as David Mann by sending him to any such a place. I propose, then, that it be put back on the Burlington circuit, and not give them a chance to misuse and half starve another valuable minister for a year."

Brother Randall Cardin, of Sandy Hill District, said, "I now see the reason why the prominent members of Burlington were so anxious to have a stationed preacher. They wanted him to do *their* part of the work, in addition to his own; in other words, to rock their cradle for them, and let them sleep on in their lukewarmness."

"This is a sad representation of the state of the Church in Burlington, brethren," interposed the Bishop;

"it can never prosper until the members learn to appreciate their faithful ministers, and co-operate with them in seeking to promote the spiritual well-being of the people. But enough has been said for the present. All in favor of the re-union of Burlington station with Burlington circuit say aye." All voted affirmatively.

"Have you any further changes to propose on the Rich Valley District, Brother Hartford?" inquired the Bishop. At this question Brother Hartford's countenance brightened up like the sun after the passing of a cloud. "Yes, sir," was the ready reply. "I have something more congenial to propose, which is to divide Carter's River Circuit into two charges. The work has been so extended and filled up under the labors of James Richards and Benjamin Salter that we now have members and territory enough for two full circuits." "Indeed!" exclaimed Brother Innis, of Black's Peak District. "How and when did all that happen?" Brother Hartford inquired of Innis, "Did you not see the account of it by Brother Richards in the revival department of the *Christian Advocate* about two weeks ago?" "No!" replied Brother Innis, "that paper must have been received after I left home to attend the two camp-meetings I took in my way to Conference." "Please represent the case, Brother Hartford," interposed the Bishop, "and then we all will know something about it." "Well, sir, to begin," said Brother Hartford, "there is a large scope of country on all sides of the old Harmony Presbyterian Church, densely populated, which had been overlooked by the Methodist preachers for about thirty years, except an occasional sermon, with at least a tacit acknowledgement that it belonged

to the Presbyterians, and we had no right to interfere with it. True, a large majority of the people did not belong to any Church, and many seldom went to Church at all, except on extraordinary occasions. They said they were utterly tired of hearing Mr. McFugle read over the same old sermons once, and in some instances twice a year. They didn't like read sermons much no way. And then the doctrine of the eternal decrees, including unconditional election and reprobation, and the impossibility of falling from grace, which he had several times preached outright as the faith of the Presbyterian Church, though he seemed to support his positions by quoting detached passages of Scripture here and there, was certainly contrary to the general tenor of the Bible, and, though he had often tried, he could no more reconcile the faith of his Church with the justice, truth and love of God than he could with what the Holy Scriptures teach of man's free agency and accountability. In the meantime several members of our Church had settled in the vicinity of Harmony, and were anxious to have our preachers take them into the circuit. In the month of August several of them attended the protracted meeting at the Fork, and brought with them a worthy and somewhat influential neighbor by the name of Gillum, who had been raised by a Methodist mother, and who, for some time, had manifested a very serious turn of mind. He soon appeared at the altar as a mourner, but seemed to have a hard struggle with what he called his most unfeeling heart, though he often wept floods of tears. On the fourth day of the meeting several brethren took him with them to the woods' prayer-

meeting, where, after encouraging and praying alternately for him for some time, he was powerfully converted, and when they came in about the time to begin the afternoon service, he seemed almost frantic with joy, and we had to give him a little time to shake hands with the good sisters that came down to the meeting with him, and tell them what great things the Lord had done for him. During the remaining three days of the meeting at the Fork he retained a bright evidence of his acceptance and salvation, and told his experience over several times with great emotion, which had a marked effect for good on many who heard him. Ever and anon glorious visions of a revival at Harmony seemed to loom up in his newly regenerated soul, and on the last evening of the meeting he could scarcely talk of anything else. After the congregation was dismissed, while the people were lingering about in groups as though they were loth to leave the hallowed place, and while several of the old members were giving parting words of encouragement to the young converts of both sexes, scattered here and there about the yard, the members from about Harmony, including old Brother and Sister McMinn, two of the oldest and best members of that Church, who had come down with them, and had engaged heartily in all the spiritual exercises of the meeting, were holding an earnest conversation in the Church, on the ladies' side. 'That's the very idea,' said old Sister McMinn, with great emphasis. 'Now, Brother Gillum, go right to Brother Richards and speak to him about it.' As I was going out to bid my co-laborers farewell, I got to where Brothers Richards and Salter were holding their horses, while giving a few parting words to some young men

who had just joined the Church nearly as soon as Brother Gillum did; and I confess I was somewhat anxious to know what it was that had so interested that earnest group in the corner of the Church. The denouement was soon made. Brother Gillum said 'the Harmony folks were all alike on the subject of having a protracted meeting at Harmony Church; Brother McMinn, who is one of the Ruling Elders, says he thinks the use of the church can be secured, and all we want now is for you and Brother Salter to say when you can let us have it.' 'A good suggestion, Brother Salter,' said Richards—'it looks like a Providential opening. Let me see,' continued Brother Richards, looking over his Counting-House Almanac which he had just drawn from his pocket, 'I would like to commence on Saturday and hold over two Sabbaths, so that, if the Lord favors us, we can take a welding heat on them before we leave. Here is what I think we can do. We have no appointment for the fifth Sunday in September, nor any the week preceding, that being our rest week. It is true I had engaged to go with Mrs. Richards at that time to visit her parents, and expected to spend the fifth Sabbath at Shiloh, near her father's; but no one knows our plan but ourselves, and I know she will forego the expected pleasure of the trip for the sake of a meeting at Harmony, for she has really chided us for not forming a church in that vicinity before now. I can call in my appointment at Sar-upta on the fourth Sunday in September, and preach there on the preceding Friday on my way to Harmony, and I can hold the meeting, with the assistance of the local preachers, until you get there on Monday, after

filling your regular Sabbath appointment.' The plan was adopted at once by Brother Salter, and Gillum went off in ecstacies."

"Bishop," said brother Gray Lester, of Pineville District, "you allow brother Hartford a very wide range in representing his district. If you allow us all the same latitude we will have to sit up whole nights before Conference closes."

"You need not fear, brother Lester," hastily replied brother Zedekiah Reedum, of Cherryville District, "I fear but few of us have the materials for detaining the Council in the same way. I would like to hear all the details of the Harmony meeting."

"Proceed, brother Hartford," said the Bishop; "but be as brief as you can to do the subject justice. There seems to be something very suggestive in your narrative."

"Well, to resume the subject," said Hartford, "soon after brother Gillum's return home, he went to see Mr. McFugle about obtaining the use of Harmony Church for the proposed meeting. He seemed surprised by such an unusual visit and request, but said he would consult the session about the matter. It was said, however, that he saw the members of the session individually before their next regular meeting, and suggested various evils that might result from giving up the Church for such a purpose. Be this as it may, when they met a majority were opposed to it; but thought it might do well enough for Mr. McFugle to have a meeting of their own at that time, and invite the Methodist brethren to come and unite with them, in which case they could keep things under their own control.

Brother McMinn—the Ruling Elder referred to before—was opposed to their plain; said it would be courteous and Christian like to let the Methodist brethren have the use of the Church to hold their meeting in their own way, without any restraint; he was well acquainted with Mr. Richards, the preacher in charge of the circuit, and he knew he would not say himself, or permit others to say, anything in our house against either our doctrines or our Church polity, but simply preach the saving truths of the Gospel; that there were many people in the neighborhood asleep in their sins, and needed the heart-searching preaching of the Methodists to awaken them; that there were scores of people thereabout that they had never got hold of yet, and he feared, from present appearances, they never would, and it would be a thousand times better to encourage the Methodists to come and get some of them than for the devil to keep them all; finally, he believed it might greatly benefit their own Church, for many of their members were evidently 'at ease in Zion,' and needed some new religious excitement to rouse them up; any thing would suit him better than that long, dreary, unbroken winter which had reigned over their Church for the last ten or twelve years. At the close of these remarks several members of the session said, in quick succession, that further debate was unnecessary, for their minds were made up not to encourage any such meeting in their Church; and with this the subject was dropped. Mr. McMinn, on returning home, found Mr. Gillum there, anxiously awaiting to hear the result of the negotiation. When Mr. McMinn told him the church could not be had, his countenance fell, and a

cloud of gloom and despondency seemed to be fast settling down upon his mind, when old sister McMinn said in an excited tone: 'she knew what could be done—they could fix them a place in the woods, like they used to do in North Carolina during the great revival where Mr. McMinn and herself were converted, and there they could hold their meetings without consulting Ruling Elders or any one else; and she believed it would be the best way, for the people were tired of going to that old, dull church. And then, as to the support of the meeting, it would be just as easy to carry provisions to the woods as to the church; Mr. McMinn and herself would do their part, and she knew that her two married sons, Duncan and Malcom, would help liberally, and as to their son-in-law, Wesley Mimms, he was so much of a Methodist any how she would not be surprised if he took a very active part in supporting the meeting, just to get something preached in the neighborhood more to his understanding of the Bible. And if we do have the meeting, the Lord grant that all our dear children may obtain salvation from sin!' and as she said this the tears began to fall like rain drops across her furrowed cheeks. Gillum's face brightened up like the sun at the end of a total eclipse. 'That is just the idea, mother McMinn,' said he, 'and I will tell you how it can be done. I have quite a lot of unseasoned plank which I have been hauling from the mill for building purposes, with which I can put up a temporary shed that will cover twice as many people as can get into Harmony church, and we can soon make any number of puncheon seats that may be needed, and a sort of camp-meeting pulpit for the preacher.' The new plan was canvassed

by the advocates of the meeting, and everything was soon arranged to hold it in the woods, on the stage road near Gillum's. In the meantime brother Gillum and a few others started a weekly prayer-meeting, in order to pray unitedly for a revival at the protracted meeting; and most earnestly did they pray, especially McMinn and his wife, whose hearts seemed to be set on the conversion of their children. I could only attend the meet- in two days, on my way from one quarterly meeting to another, but it would fill a good-sized volume to narrate all the thrilling incidents that occurred from day to day, as related to me by brothers Richards and Salter. Gil- lum's wife had been under deep awakenings ever since he set up family prayer on his return from the meeting at the Fork, and she was converted on the first day of the meeting, and gave an original, impromptu shout, which seemed to melt every heart near by. Duncan and Malcom McMinn both professed saving faith in Christ on Monday morning; that night both their wives were brought into the kingdom of grace; in the course of the meeting Wesley Mimms, the son-in-law of McMinn and his wife, and the three Misses McMinn, were all hopefully born of the spirit; and about forty others, some from every grade of society. Brother Richards said he noticed that the negroes came in great numbers at night, and seemed to partake of the general awakening; and he suggested, as the crops in the neighbor- hood were light, that it might be well to let them have the remaining days of the meeting. The sugges- tion was well received, and large companies of negroes came every day after that, and about thirty gave evi- dence of true conversion. Toward the close of the

meeting Father McMinn was often heard to say, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' As for mother McMinn, her full heart often broke forth in loud shouts of 'Glory to God in the highest.' She said it was more like the revival in which she was converted than any revival she has since witnessed. Forty white and thirty colored people united with the Church, which, in addition to ten old members collected from various places round about, gave us at once a membership of eighty. The shed was immediately placed on the plan of the circuit as a regular Church, class-leaders were appointed, the rules read, and everything arranged methodistically. They determined on building a chapel of commodious size, which will be finished in the spring. Mr. McFugle was at the meeting a day or two, but he sat away back, and really seemed to be a cold spectator. Ruling Elder McNabby and a few others, including a small number of outsiders, seemed to want to find fault with everything, but most of the members of Harmony were very serious and orderly, and quite a number, both male and female, united earnestly in all the exercises of the meeting, and several went so far as to say, if they could not have warmer times at Harmony they would visit the shed often in preference. In the course of a few weeks there were several accessions to Harmony Church as additional fruits of our meeting at the shed; but Mr. McFugle preached a sermon on what he called 'the massive doctrines of the Presbyterian Church,' in which he took occasion to speak very disparagingly of Armenianism in general, and the Methodist Episcopal Church in particular, and that ended his

revival. Several of our young members were very much unsettled by the controversies between the older members that grew out of that untimely, and I may safely add antinomian sermon of Mr. McFugle; so much so that Brother Gillum requested Brother Richards to reply to it at the shed. Brother Richards told him that was out of the line of his business, but he could put them on a much safer course than controversial sermons—which was to request the members at the shed to raise, by private contribution, ten dollars, and hand over to him and he would send immediately to our Book Depository and get a supply of our Denominational Tracts for gratuitous circulation among the young members, and by the time they had read them over carefully the last vestige of Calvinism would be swept from their minds, and they would then make the most reliable members of our Church, in consequence of having settled these doctrinal points so early in their religious life. Brother Richards also proposed to get several of our most approved little volumes on the subject of Christian Perfection and Entire Sanctification, with a few copies of Hester Ann Rogers, in order that they might see to what heights of holiness and what fullness of love they may attain, even early in their Christian life. Brother Gillum approved the plan, and it was at once carried out."

"Well, well, brother Hartford," said the Bishop, looking at his watch at the same time, "we have let you occupy more time than we can usually allow members of the Council, but really your account of the work of Divine grace among your people has been so interesting and suggestive I could not find it in my heart to limit

you; and at a convenient time, perhaps just before I announce the appointments at the close of the Conference, I will give the preachers an exhortation, revived in my mind by the facts you have narrated. What more have you to say in the representation of Carter's River Circuit? Please be as brief as a fair representation will permit."

Brother Hartford continued: "It would require too much time, Mr. President, for me to go into further details of the glorious work of God on the circuit the past year. The brethren who labored there, both itinerant and local, carried out the principle of holding on to all they had, and adding all they could, both in territory and membership. Several important neighborhoods in which there were no Church organizations have been taken into the circuit, preaching places established and Churches collected. The settlement heretofore known as Kangaroodom, on account of the ignorance and almost savage wickedness of the inhabitants, was visited early in the year by brother Richards, who commenced preaching in a little log school-house. Several families soon became quite interested. The lay brethren from the adjacent Churches attended the appointments of the preachers, to give encouragement by their presence and prayers, all of which resulted in a proposition for a protracted meeting in July. A brush arbor was prepared near the school-house, under which the brethren held a meeting of seven days' continuance, having two long services each day, with an additional one at night. The result is a membership of forty odd members, with prayer and class-meetings in the school-house, and a commodious house

for worship in process of construction. But the greatest battle, resulting in the most decisive victory, brothers Richards and Salter had, was in the vicinity of the Baptist Church known as Enon. Here they labored hard and long; and their object being, not hostility to the Baptists, but to get poor sinners truly awakened and converted to God, they were, about the first of September, favored with a great outpouring of the spirit; and soon a very general work of grace was manifested among all classes of people, though most extensively among the young. A goodly number of the Baptists of both sexes united earnestly in the work, and several of them were heard to say that they had lived long enough to see that the Baptists could not get every body into their Church, and they would greatly prefer seeing their relatives and neighbors become good Methodists to seeing them live on in sin, as they had been doing heretofore. Mr. Crafford, the pastor of Enon, and several of his leading members, in the meantime found a great many objections to the Methodistic movement in the vicinity of their Church; called it wild fire, sparks of their own kindling, mere animal excitement calculated to mislead and ruin the people, etc. The brethren, however, who were engaged in the work paid but little attention to their complaints and bitter inuendoes, but pushed the battle to the gate, and labored day and night to bring sinners to 'a knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins.' The consequence was a rich harvest of souls, and the organization of a new Methodist Church on the river below Enon. Near the close of the meeting brother Richards set apart an hour to baptize all the young converts who were willing to

receive the ordinance by pouring. But few, at first, seemed inclined to be baptized in that way, having heard so much said at Enon about following the Savior into the yielding flood—immersion being the only Scriptural mode of baptism, etc. Brother Richards, however, delivered a discourse on the subject, in which, with scarcely an allusion to the exclusiveness of the Baptists on this point, he assigned a number of reasons why the Methodists, as well as nine-tenths of Christendom, were in favor of baptism by affusion. The kind and affectionate manner in which he did it seemed to add additional weight to his arguments, so that when he invited the candidates, a large majority of the young converts came forward, and with meekness and humility, accompanied with much tenderness of heart, took upon themselves their baptismal vows, and received the ordinance in the apostolic form. Several, however, were not so easily delivered from the almost uninterrupted prejudices of their previous training in favor of immersion, and brother Watt, the class-leader, expressed his fears that they would ultimately join the Baptist Church, though in regard to everything else they much preferred our Church. Brother Richards affirmed they would not do this, if they were honest inquirers after truth, and would give themselves a little time for reading and reflection. He requested Brother Watt to ask the members to raise five dollars by private contribution, and he would send forthwith to the Depository for a package of our excellent tracts on the Subjects and Mode of Baptism, for gratuitous circulation among the members; and we will advise them, said he, to take the tracts and their Bibles to their chambers and prayerfully

read and compare them, and if they will do this, but few, if any of them, will ever be immersed."

"Excuse me, Brother Hartford, for interrupting you," interposed the Bishop. "All you say is very interesting; but the tavern bells are already reminding us of the near approach of the supper hour, so we must end this Carter's River affair. I am in favor of dividing the circuit; the extent of territory, but more especially the addition of several new churches, with such a large increase of membership, demands it. What say you all?" The vote for division was unanimous. "Now for the dividing line," said the Bishop, looking at Brother Hartford.

"The river is, no doubt, the only proper line of division," was the reply of Brother Hartford. "This will give a circuit of good size on the east, and there is still some unoccupied territory on the west, where the people are already clamorous for Methodist preaching, that can be taken in, so as to make a full circuit on that side. And this arrangement will save the trouble, and often the danger of crossing the river and swamp in high water."

"Well, the river then is the dividing line," rejoined the Bishop; "what will you call the two circuits?"

"By all means call one of them Carter's River," said Brother Reedum hastily; "I am in favor of retaining the old name. I have a reverence for old names."

"So have I," said Brother Innis, "if they are suitable; otherwise I have not."

Just here the Bishop interposed by saying, "I wish to call the attention of the Council to a rule, not only of propriety, but of much importance, in giving names

to their several pastoral charges, which is, in every case where it can be done consistently with common sense, to call them after a county site, post-town or other geographical place, so that their names and location can be found on the ordinary maps of the country. This would not only be a convenience to all who might wish to write to the preachers on the circuit, but it would, especially, be a matter of great importance to the future historian of the Church, who may wish to give the locality of the place about which he is writing."

"But, Bishop," said Brother Reedum, "Carter's River is a geographical name, and can be found on the maps of the country. Why not retain it, then, as the name of one of the circuits?"

"I know," replied the Bishop, spreading his portable map of the State on the table, "I know that Carter's River is on the map, but here it seems to be about three hundred miles long, and embraces in its valley fifteen counties; and yet I find no county, town or even post-office named after it; and who that does not already know could tell the location of Carter's River Circuit by looking at the map? They could not tell whether it is near the source of the river, in the middle, or about its mouth. And suppose any one at a distance, who might not know his postoffice, should wish to write to the preacher on Carter's River Circuit, how could he determine his postoffice by looking on the map? Whereas, if the circuit is named after a county-site or post-office, or even country post-office, he can determine at once where he would receive a letter."

"But, Bishop," said Brother Ransom, "I not only have, with Brother Reedum, a reverence for old names,

but I am opposed to this perpetual change in the names of our pastoral charges. Some of the old members will hardly learn to call the new names of their circuits before they die."

"They will not be very apt scholars, then," said Brother Lester, of Pineville District, rather facetiously.

"But, Brother Ransom," said the Bishop, "we are a progressive people, and consequently must be changing frequently; and whenever we can change from bad to good, or from better to best, we ought to change without any hesitation. But our time is out. Brother Hartford, give the Secretary the names of the two circuits that he may write them down."

"Call the one on the east Adamsville," replied Brother Hartford, "it being the county site, and central to the newly-arranged circuit, and the one west of the river, Colton, after the depot town on the Railroad."

"Colton, indeed!" retorted Brother Reedum. "If you will not call it Carter's River, do name it after some decent place. I am told that Colton is already full of drunkards, gamblers and loafers, with scarcely a redeeming quality about the place."

"If you please, Mr. President," said Brother Hartford, "I wish to correct Brother Reedum. We have already in Colton a snug church edifice, with about twenty members, and a constantly-increasing congregation, with a weekly class and prayer-meeting, and a flourishing Sabbath school. The brethren, also, in prospect of having the circuit divided, have secured an eligible lot for a parsonage, as it will be the most central place for their preachers to live."

"Nothing more need be said, brethren," interposed

The Bishop. "Its name is Colton. Write it down, Brother Howe. We have now only an hour left to take our tea, attend to our closet devotions, and meet here at 7 o'clock. Please come, brethren, prepared to represent your work with brevity, so that we may get through revising the various charges by 10 o'clock, if possible. We are adjourned for the present."

## CHAPTER III.

**A** Colored Charge—Premature Selection of a Preacher—Plainville District—Jefferson Circuit Divided for Good Reasons—Middle River District—A Mission Elevated—The Final Squabble About Names—Sandy Hill District—Discussion About Creating a Small Station—Elevation of two Mission Circuits and Forming a New One—Black's Peak District—How a Mission was Elevated to a Circuit by the “Right Sort of a Man”—A Lick Backward—Jacob Sprouts a Bad Case—Following Up the New Settlers—Pineville District—Multiplying Circuits—Changing Names—Committee Appointed to Re-adjust the Districts.

At 7 o'clock in the evening the Council met, pursuant to adjournment, and was opened with prayer, Brother Reedum leading our devotions. When we arose from our knees and resumed our places around the table, the Bishop said: “Now, brethren, we are getting into harness; let us endeavor to proceed more rapidly than we did this afternoon. What further revision is needed in the Rich Valley District, Brother Hartford?”

“Nothing,” replied brother Hartford, “except the addition of a colored charge, to be bracketed to Still Water Quarterly Conference.”

“You mean a colored mission, I reckon,” said brother Ransom.

“No, sir,” interposed Hartford, “I mean a colored charge; for the noble hearted planters in that valley say they intend to support their own colored preacher, without any expense to the missionary treasury.”

“What!” said Jackson Innis, “do you intend to send a *colored* preacher there, to associate with those rich, refined and intelligent families, and to preach on those large plantations? I don't know where you will find him in this Conference.”

“No, Mr. President,” said brother Hartford, “I did

not mean a *colored* man. Brother Innis is inclined to be hypercritical to-night. I meant the preacher sent to preach to the colored people. The planters there will pay him well if he is the right sort of a man, and if he is not they will not have him."

"Well," replied the Bishop, "if we create the new colored charge, I suppose you can find the man?"

"Yes, sir," was the ready reply of Hartford, "I have my eye on him. A man every way qualified. Pious, experienced, refined, intelligent and courtly; the very man to move among those lordly families, and through them gain unrestrained access to the servants."

"If he is all that," said brother Reedum, "I think I shall need him for one of my Cherryville charges."

"If you please, brethren," said the Bishop, "we are not stationing preachers to-night. What say you about the creation of the colored charge under consideration? There seems to be no objection. Brother secretary, put it on the plan of the district."

"Now we take up Plainville District. What changes do you propose, brother Howe?" inquired the Bishop of the writer.

"Only one at the present," was the reply. "There is Jefferson circuit, somewhat in the shape of the letter O, spread over a large scope of country, with twenty-two regular preaching places—more than any preacher in charge can do justice to; and then there are settlements in the center, and several about the circumference, that never can be reached with our present plan. The circuit has gained but little in membership for several years past, and by changing the Sunday appointments from one place to another we have only been building

up large Sabbath congregations one year to lose them the next; and, by so doing, we give other denominations an advantage over us. There, for instance, is the Baptist Church on Clear Run, where they have had regular preaching on the second Lord's day and Saturday before in every month for twenty years past, and the consequence is they have collected and retained a large congregation there, and have a prosperous Church, though they have had to change their pastors several times, and have had several supplies that would not bear a comparison, in point of preaching abilities, with most of our preachers. The same may be said of Salem, the Presbyterian Church on East Fork, except that they have had educated ministers all the time. Quite a number of families attend these Churches that say they prefer the Methodist Church, if they could only have Methodist preaching regularly on the Sabbath within any reasonable distance. Heretofore we could not do much better, but with our present supply of preachers we can begin to make advantageous changes in our large circuits."

"But, if you divide the circuit, brother Howe, what about the support of the preachers?" inquired brother Cardin. "I think that circuit, large as it is, has frequently failed to meet the claims of the preachers."

I replied: "The people do not like to pay for what they do not get, no matter how much they may need it. They say just give them the ministerial labor, in and out of the pulpit, that they need, and as they prefer having it in regard to time, and they aver their readiness to pay the disciplinary allowance of the preachers. But, as it is, their pastors have no time to visit their

families, except those living right in their way from one appointment to another, and it is seldom they are in reach to visit their sick, or bury their dead. I believe, Mr. President, a small field well cultivated will yield more than a large one hastily run over at long intervals. Again, we can never get hold of the destitute settlements in and around Jefferson circuit in its present form; and by this defective policy we are not only leaving the souls of the people uncared for, but we are losing pecuniary aid which they are willing and ready to give us, if we will preach the glorious Gospel of the Son of God to them in accordance with their wants and wishes ”

“ Well, I reckon that circuit would be the better of a division,” said the Bishop. “ What say you, brethren ? ” The division was adopted, and one was called Jeffersonville, and the other Baden. The Bishop then remarked: “ I think you said, brother Howe, that you had nothing further to propose at present. Let us now proceed to Middle River District. What have you got to say about changes in your work, brother Ransom ? ”

“ I have no change to propose,” he replied, “ except to elevate Middle River Mission to a self-supporting circuit. John Burgess, the preacher in charge, had quite a revival there this year, and the people say they are now both able and willing to support their preachers.”

“ I am glad of that,” said brother Lester. “ They have been a dead expense to our feeble treasury for several years, and I hope, if they can have another revival or two, that they will begin to refund, in the way of missionary collections, over and above the support of their preachers.”

"I have no doubt of it," rejoined brother Ransom. "They have ample means, if they can only have a sense of their duty, and a will to do it. But the truth is, that work heretofore has been put off, somehow, with any sort of a preacher but the right sort, and Methodism has never been fairly represented there until the past year. But, I tell you, sir, brother Burgess is a 'man full of faith and the Holy Ghost,' and no one-idea man either. He had not been there four months before he had the whole machinery of the Church in motion. Large congregations, collected by powerful preaching and pastoral visiting; class books revised; probationers of several years' standing received into full fellowship, and dead weights dropped off; class and prayer meetings inaugurated; several Sabbath schools organized; members that had almost got out of sight and out of mind were hunted up and brought back to the Church; a good supply of religious literature, in the form of Bibles, hymn-books, small volumes of different sorts, and well-selected tracts, were industriously circulated among the people, and at least twenty subscribers to the *Advocate* were secured. These movements and successes prepared the way for the protracted meetings in the summer and fall, which were attended with great good, so that we now have a circuit there that any man of the right stamp will love to travel."

"Well, well!" said Gray Lester, "Brother Ransom speaks earnestly, almost eloquently, about the transition of Middle River Mission from a state of dependency to that of a self-supporting Circuit."

"It is an eloquent subject," interposed the Bishop. "It shows progress in the right direction. I love to see

the desert converted into a fruitful field. But one sentence, from Brother Ransom, fell with crushing weight upon my heart: 'Put off somehow with any sort of a preacher but the right sort.' And have we some preachers among us who are not of the right sort? I fear we have! I know we have! And nobody is more responsible for it than our too good-natured and forbearing Presiding Elders. You know they are not 'the right sort,' and yet, instead of faithfully representing their deficiencies and delinquencies to the Conference, you let them pass by, saying that you have nothing against their *moral character*. Brethren, if a man, from time to time, voluntarily and deliberately takes upon himself the vows of a Pastor in the Church of God, until he passes from a licentiate to the grade of an Elder, and then as voluntarily and deliberately violates them, in whole or in part, by neglecting to do what he has again and again promised to do, can it be faithfully said that his *moral character* is good? Is he not guilty both of fraud and falsehood? He withholds from the people services which they have a right to claim at his hands, and he falsifies his oft-repeated promise to the Conference to be diligent in the work assigned him. Your Bishops come in for a large share of blame for appointing such men to Circuits; but what can we do but appoint them when the Conference passes their characters and leaves them on our hands. Brethren, if, after faithful admonition and reasonable forbearance, such men can not be reformed and improved, you ought, in every case, to get them out of the way, either by requesting them to retire voluntarily or by locating them as unacceptable to the people. And now, as our Conference has just opened

to-day, I hope you will deal faithfully with all such cases, if they exist among you. We want none but true and faithful men to appoint as overseers of the Church of Jesus Christ. Brother Burgess has not the advantages of a finished education, and is plain in language and manners, and yet, as Brother Ransom says, being 'a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost,' and conscientious in discharging, not only a part, but all of his ministerial duties, you see what he has been instrumental in accomplishing in one year. Pardon me, brethren, for interrupting your deliberations so long. There is no objection to elevating Middle River Mission to a self-supporting Circuit. Just strike off the word mission after river, Brother Howe."

"I think, Mr. President, now is the right time to give this new Circuit, just admitted into the union of Circuits, a more appropriate name," said Brother Hartford. "There are as many objections to Middle River as the name of a Circuit as you had this afternoon to Carter's River. I propose that we call it Oakville, which is the name of the county town near its center."

"Well, I suppose we old fogies," said Zedekiah Redum, "need not say anything more against giving up our venerable names. Change! Change!! seems to be the order now-a-days."

"Yes, Brother Redum," said Gray Lester, in his good-humored way, "whenever we can change for the better we ought to do it."

"We have a strong church at Oakville, Mr. President," said Brother Ransom, "and if the name of Middle River must be dropped, that is the most appropriate name to adopt."

"So let it be," said the Bishop.

"Now, Mr. President," said Josephus Hartford, "as we have begun a good work on the Middle River District, suppose we carry it on to perfection. At a proper time I will suggest a more appropriate name for the District; but now I am content to suggest that Mount Vernon, a post town, take the place of Indian Creek on our minutes; and that Mill Creek be superseded by the name of Chesnut Grove, which is the name of a permanent postoffice, store and church, and the location of the Circuit parsonage, and for ten years has been on the maps of the country."

"I hav'nt a word to say, Mr. President," rather gruffly remarked Brother Reedum. "I see that Ransom and myself are in a hopeless minority on all such questions."

"I reckon," said Brother Ransom, "it is best, Brother Reedum. Since I have weighed the arguments in favor of geographical names, my former prejudices in favor of old names have yielded to what I now consider more enlightened views on the subject."

Brother Reedum now broke out into a hearty laugh, and said: "If Brother Ransom had gone over to the side of Young America, he might as well go too, as the name of a Circuit was not essential to salvation any way."

"If you please, brethren," said the Bishop, soberly, "I trust I shall not hear the words 'old fogy and Young America' in this Council Chamber again. Let the politicians have all the advantages of their new-coined words and slang phrases. Let us know and speak of each other as ministers of Jesus Christ. The

brethren, I understand, now all consent to the proposed change of names. Let the new names be entered on the plan of the District. We have the charges on three more Districts to revise, brethren. Let us proceed. What revision is desirable in the Sandy Hill District, Brother Cardin?"

"The first change I propose, Bishop," answered Randall Cardin, "is to take the town of Sandy Hill and unite with it Asbury Chapel, both of which are somewhat isolated from the body of the Circuit, and constitute them a separate charge. I think we will never be able to make any headway in the town until this is done. Week-day preaching does not suit merchants, mechanics, artizans, lawyers, and others who are dependent on public patronage for the success of their business. They do not like to be away from their usual places of business in business hours. And night preaching and Sabbath afternoon preaching is but little better. It gives other denominations, who occupy the 11 o'clock hour on Sabbath morning, a decided advantage over us. Nor do I think we ought to put off such a community as we have at Asbury with only week-day preaching if we can do better for them. With the change I propose we can give each place two Sabbaths in each month, and leave as much to do on the balance of the Circuit as any minister in charge can well attend to."

"Mr. President," inquired Brother Lester, "I would like to know how the Methodists occupy two Sabbaths in the month in Sandy Hill when the Baptists now claim two and the Episcopalians two?"

"Well, Brother Lester," answered Brother Cardin,

"I can tell how we can do it. We have as suitable a place of worship there as they have, with a membership of about thirty—not quite as many as the Baptists have, but more than the Episcopalian; and, in addition, have a considerable patronage among the non-professing, a number of whom do not attend either of the other churches. They say their exclusiveness does not suit their views of Christian charity and the wide-spreading benevolence of the gospel scheme. So that all we have to do is, to make our appointments at 11 o'clock, and again at night for the white congregation, and at 3, p.m., for the colored people, and we shall have our own people and our full share of the non-professors."

"But, Brother Cardin," replied Brother Lester, "will not this look like setting up opposition to the Baptists and Episcopalian?"

"Not at all, Brother Lester," answered Randall Cardin, "not in the eyes of the intelligent and liberal. We are in a free country, and have as indefeasable a right to serve our church and people there on Sunday at 11 o'clock as they have to serve theirs. Besides this, we are not opposed to them nor any other evangelical Church; so far from it, we are co-workers with them. They have not got all the people converted yet, and, I presume, never will. The Methodistic proclivities of several influential families are such that they seldom attend the other churches, in consequence of the side cuts so often made at the Methodists. There is Judge Hammers—whose venerable mother is a member of our church at Asbury—says he and his family are done going to the Baptist Church so long as Mr. Shurtluff is pastor, because he heard him boldly assert that 'the

Baptist Church is the only true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ now on earth, and that all other religionists are mere sects, trying to climb to heaven in their own way.' And Major Mott, one of the first lawyers in the place, and whose wife is one of our most humble and consistent members,' says he will never attend the Episcopal Church again while Dr. Mellville is Rector, because he heard him say, in a sermon last spring, 'that the Protestant Episcopal Church is the only true, Apostolic Church in the land, and that all other professedly religious bodies in the country were unauthorized and self-constituted sects, beyond the pale of the true Church, and had no claim to anything Christian beyond the uncovenanted mercies of God; and he would not, for his right arm, be willing to take their chance for heaven.' And, Mr. President and brethren, ought we not to take advantage of the attachment of these people to our doctrines and ministry, and lead them to our Church, soothe their wounded feelings, and labor and pray to get them truly converted? I think we ought. We have our part to do in bringing lost sinners to Christ, and the Head of the Church will hold us accountable for its performance."

"Really, Brother Cardin seems to be in earnest," said Jackson Innis, in his quaint way; "but I should like to know how much good he expects to get into such a man as Major Mott?"

"A good deal, I hope, Brother Innis," quickly answered Brother Cardin; "enough, I hope, to save him from sin and hell and lead him to heaven. But suppose all our fond expectations of seeing him a true Christian should in the end be blighted, it will be no harm to get

a liberal share of good out of him, as it flows so spontaneously from his generous nature. No man in town is more liberal in the support of our institutions and ministry than he is. How much of this is attributable to the gentle influence of his lovely Christian wife I need not undertake to guess. But one thing has greatly encouraged me of late to hope for the Major's accession to the household of faith, which is, that he has been unusually serious ever since the death of his son, and has often expressed the hope that he might yet be prepared to meet him in heaven."

The Bishop gently rapped with his pen-knife on the table and inquired: "Brethren, where are we drifting to? Come to the point, if you please. Will the town of Sandy Hill and the church at Asbury willingly receive and provide for a preacher with a small family in a way to leave his heart and hands unfettered, so that he can serve them with a ready mind and will? Let us not forget the case of David Mann at Burlington last year."

Brother Cardin replied: "You need have no fears on that point at all. Judge Hammers and Major Mott say, just give them one of your plain, warm-hearted, medium preachers, that will attend to his work well without getting into any foolish controversies with the other ministers or church members, and they will guarantee his disciplinary allowance, with the pledges of help they have received from Asbury."

"Let us make the desired arrangement, Bishop," said Brother Reedum; "I think the move a good one."

"There appears no reasonable objection to it," answered the Bishop; "let it be so entered on the minutes."

"What further revision on your District, Brother Cardin?" inquired the Bishop.

"Nothing, Mr. President, but what can be done in a few minutes," answered Brother Cardin. "As the result of good revivals, I wish Stafford and Hunterville Missions placed on the list of self-sustaining Circuits, and a new Circuit to be formed, composed of parts of each, to be called Morganton. We have had an increase of more than four hundred members in those two Missions this year, and the multiplication of new churches in hitherto destitute neighborhoods requires that these changes should be made. I could tell of the triumphs of grace in detail, as Brother Hartford did about the great revival on Carter's River, but our time is too precious for that to-night."

The Bishop replied: "Things work easy, brethren, after a revival. But what say you to granting Brother Cardin's triple request? If none object let the proposed changes be put on the minutes. What further in the way of changes, Brother Cardin?"

The answer was: "Change the name of Fox River Circuit to that of Foxville, an important and growing town not far west of the center of the Circuit."

"Enter it so on the minutes, Brother Howe," was the order of the Bishop, as he "presumed there would be no more debate about giving the different Charges suitable geographical names where they have them not already."

The Bishop now remarked: "We have two more Districts to revise, brethren, and but one hour to do it in if we quit at 10 o'clock, which is desirable on my part, as I already feel much fatigued. Now tell us,

Brother Innis, as soon as you can to do justice to the subject, what modifications of the work are needed on Black's Peak District?"

Brother Innis replied: "We have been favored with a blessed harvest of souls on Rocky Valley Mission the past year, and the Official Board, at our last Quarterly Conference, by formal vote, requested to be placed on the list of self-sustaining Circuits. And, as an evidence of their willingness as well as ability to support their preacher, they have refunded the Missionary drafts drawn in favor of their Mission at our last Conference; in addition to which they have built three new churches and given the preacher a new suit of clothes, worth fifty dollars, to wear to Conference."

"I thought," said Gray Lester, "I never saw John Toby look so spruce in my life as he did in the Conference this morning. That fine present from Rocky Valley accounts for it. I wish some more of us could get served that way."

"Yes, sir," continued Brother Innis; "John Toby is the right sort of a man to bring up a depressed Circuit. He is equal to John Burgess, of Middle River Mission, or John any body else. His whole heart is in the work. He professes and exemplifies, in his spirit and conversation, the blessing of salvation from all inward as well as outward sin, and entire consecration to God. Holiness is his theme among Christians in public and private. As soon as people are converted he directs their attention to the higher grades of Christian experience, and urges them at once to seek for purity of heart, and to be 'filled with all the fullness of God;' and the glorious result is, that many who were born of the Spirit

at the protracted meetings in midsummer are now rejoicing in that ‘perfect love that casteth out fear,’ and exhibit the maturity of well-established Christians. Brother Toby, sir, keeps the whole machinery of Methodism in motion, and, when the proper time comes, I shall say to you, sir, that there is an almost universal desire for him to be returned another year.”

“I shall have a word to say about that, Mr. President,” interposed Gray Lester. “I think John Toby will suit a broken down Circuit I just left on the Pineville District.”

“We are not fixing the appointments yet, brethren,” said the Bishop; “it will be time enough to decide where Brother Toby will go when we get to that part of our work.”

“The right sort of a man to bring up a depressed Circuit! Keeps the whole machinery of Methodism in motion! Was favored with a blessed harvest of souls!” were sentences that fell in measured succession from the lips of the Bishop.

“Yes, brethren,” he continued, “if you wish to build new churches, have a revival! If you wish to bring up a depressed Circuit, have a revival! If the preachers wish to be well fed and clothed, let them labor and pray for a genuine revival—such a revival of pure Bible Christianity as implies the thorough awakening, conversion and sanctification of souls! How such a revival changes the whole aspect of things on a Circuit! ‘The wilderness and solitary places become glad, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose.’” The Bishop’s heart grew warm as he spoke, and he concluded with the ejaculation, “O for revivals! Genuine revivals every-

where in the land !” To which every heart and tongue in the Council responded an earnest “Amen !”

“Strike out the word Mission, Brother Howe, and let it henceforth be known as Rocky Valley Circuit,” was the instruction given by the Bishop.

“There is another change, Mr. President,” continued Brother Innis, “that I am ashamed to ask for after what has just passed. It will be ‘like snow in harvest,’ but the deplorable state of affairs requires it to be done. At our last Conference we elevated Smith’s Valley Mission to a self-supporting Circuit, fully believing it could, and would, support a single man, and pay a little toward the salary of the Presiding Elder; but, sir, forty-seven dollars and fifty cents was all the Stewards said they could raise; and I can not, with a clear conscience, have a hand in sending any good man there next year to get him involved in debt, by serving the Circuit at his own expense: and to send an unsuitable man again would be far worse than to leave them without a preacher. I ask that Smith’s Valley be placed on the list of Missions again, with an appropriation, the amount of which I will suggest at the proper time.”

“I am sorry to hear that about Smith’s Valley,” said the Bishop; “that looks like making a lick backward. What has occurred to bring about this state of affairs ?”

“Well, sir,” replied Brother Innis, “to use a phrase I have already heard in this Council, Jacob Sprouts was not the right sort of a preacher for that Circuit, nor do I believe he is the right sort of a preacher for any Circuit. I thought it rather ominous at our last Conference, that, while several of the Presiding Elders were trying to take some of the best preachers away from

Black's Peak District, not one of them that had ever had Jacob Sprouts a year would consent to have him again, and were so ready to offer him to me in exchange for one of my preachers ; and I objected to receive him until I was overruled. The brethren who knew him said he was an able-bodied man, and a passable preacher ; and though he had not accomplished much yet, they were still in hopes that he would be able to strike fire some day, and do something handsome for the Church. But, I tell you, Mr. President, I don't believe there is any 'strike fire' about Jacob Sprouts. His constant study seems to be, how little of everything he can do that pertains to the work of the ministry, and yet retain his connection with the Conference, except eating, sleeping, chewing and smoking tobacco."

"I hope, Brother Innis," said Gray Lester, "you do not include chewing and smoking tobacco in the work that pertains to the ministry ?"

"Well, it ought not to be," rejoined Brother Innis, "but there is a great deal too much of it done by some of our ministers, especially by Jacob Sprouts."

"If you please, brethren," said the Bishop, "this is not the time or place to investigate the character of Brother Sprouts ; that will be done in open Conference when his name is called in due course. But I am really sorry to find that you have retained such a man among you for five years. Just as soon as you find a man will not do for an itinerant preacher, you ought to dissolve his connection with the Conference. The interests of all concerned require this to be done."

"Bishop," said Brother Ransom, "we have no doubt erred in this case, but it has been on the side of charity.

We allowed ourselves to hope that his peccadillos might be cured, as he was a young man ; and as he had a fair rudimental education, we thought him capable of becoming an acceptable and useful preacher ; but we have, so far, been sadly disappointed."

"To the point, brethren," interposed the Bishop ; "will you return Smith's Valley to the list of Missions ?"

All agreed, and it was so entered on the minutes.

"My final proposition, Bishop," said Brother Innis, "is to establish a Mission to be called Coalville, and another to be called Ironburg : for, in addition to the large number of operatives engaged in raising coal from the mines near Coalville, the whole valley is becoming densely populated as far up as the land is arable. And the same is true of the valley in which the iron-works are situated ; for, besides those engaged in the smelting business, many small farms have been settled up the valley."

"Will you have preachers enough to supply so many new works ?" inquired the Bishop, which being answered affirmatively, the two Missions were recognized by the names suggested.

"Only half an hour left us," said the Bishop, looking at his watch ; "please represent Pineville District, Brother Lester."

"Well, sir," replied Brother Lester, "to commence with the most important case, I propose a division of Tarville Circuit into three."

"One too many, I think," said Brother Reedum, hastily, "I do not believe it is good policy to cut up the circuits so small that they will neither give employment nor support to the preachers."

"I perceive, Mr. President," said Gray Lester, "that Brother Reedum is wide awake; a thing I hardly expected from the way he reclined his head on the table. But if he will listen to my representation, I think he will coincide with my views in the end. Brethren who have never yet received an appointment in the pine woods must permit us, who live and labor there, to represent our own work."

"There will be no objection to that, Brother Lester," said the Bishop, "proceed at once."

"Well, sir, to proceed," said Brother Lester, "Tarville Circuit now has thirty preaching places in it, and is about four hundred miles round. It is not in the shape of an O, as Brother Howe said this afternoon of old Jefferson Circuit; but it is more in the shape of two figure eights with their ends together; and all the arguments he advanced in favor of dividing Jefferson Circuit into two will hold good in favor of dividing Tarville into three. No man can do justice to one half of such a circuit, and this is the reason the preachers are so poorly supported there. They fill two appointments every Sabbath, leaving twenty-two to be filled on week days, and several of them at night. They have but little time to make special efforts at any given point, without neglecting other portions of the Circuit too long; so they just have to touch and go all the year round. There are two important county towns, and four considerable depot towns on the railroad running lengthways through the Circuit, besides a dozen destitute settlements in and around it, where they are anxious for Methodist preaching. I am not, Mr. President, for adhering to any arrangements that do not work well enough to accom-

plish the ends of the Christian ministry, no matter how venerable they are with age. That Circuit has been in *statu quo* for ten years past, and but little has been accomplished there, except to ride down good horses and wear out good preachers. For the want of time to look after and attend to persons awakened and converted through the instrumentality of our preachers, a large portion of them have been drawn into other Churches, whose ministers and members seem to be constantly on the look-out to proselyte our young converts before they have time to become established by a knowledge of our doctrines and church government. There is another important item to be taken into the argument in favor of dividing Tarville Circuit as I propose. It is this: We have but few parsonages in the pine woods and mountainous portions of our Conference, and our preachers are poorly supported at best, so that nearly all our married preachers have been driven by necessity to settle their families on farms of their own, where their wives and children, by industry and economy, can assist in making a competency. And there being but few Circuits in their reach, and those few so large as to keep them from home from twenty to twenty-five days in every four weeks, in a few years they have been compelled to locate: whereas, if we had more Circuits in their reach, and of more reasonable size, these holy and useful ministers might be retained in the Conference to the end of life. The Quarterly Conference, at its last session for the year, appointed a judicious committee from all parts of the Circuit to take this matter into consideration and report to me on the last day of the Willow Creek Camp-meeting; and they unanimously reported in favor of making

three Circuits, and marked out the boundaries of each one, in which report I concur. If this plan for three Circuits is adopted by the Council, I am authorized to present the certificates of location of two valuable ex-traveling preachers to the Conference for their re-admission. I will not consume any more time; let the Council decide."

"Give us the vote, Bishop," said Brother Innis; "anything in preference to the monotonous and unsuccessful traveling, round and round on old Tarville from year to year. Better brush it out and begin anew. Our preachers all dread it. They call it old Ironsides, where they are sent to undergo a hardening process. But, poor fellows! it has proved too hard for some of them; two of whom fell martyrs to their fidelity within its bounds."

"No; we will not brush it out, Brother Innis," said the Bishop, "but hold on to what little we have got there as a beginning for our three Circuits that we are going to make out of it. Put them down, Brother Howe; it is not necessary to call for the ayes and nays. I see the Council all favor it. But stop: they are not named yet; what will you call them, Brother Lester?"

"Well, sir," answered Brother Lester, "to show that we still have some reverence for old names, where they are appropriate, we will call the center Tarville; the one on the north we will call Summerton, the name of an important depot town on the railroad, and the one on the South we will call Halifax, the name of a county town."

"Let them be so written," said the Bishop. "What further, Brother Lester?"

Lester answered: "Sir, I want the name of Cow Bayou changed to Bellemont; and that of Panther Bayou superseded by Uniontown; and I want Davis River Mission to be elevated to a self-supporting Circuit, to be known hereafter as Elkton."

These changes were adopted and recorded.

"Bishop," said Brother Ransom, holding his watch to the candle, "our time is just out; but you see from the division and multiplication of charges, we will have to make a new District, and the old ones must be readjusted in order to remove a fruitful source of dissatisfaction in the Conference."

"Let it be understood," interposed Brother Reedum, "I want no change in the Cherryville District. I am perfectly satisfied with it as it is."

"I say the same in regard to my District," said Brother Hartford, emphatically.

"How do you know that you will have a District, Brother Hartford?" was the quizzical interrogatory of Jackson Innis.

"Well, I mean the Rich Valley District," Hartford replied, rather hastily.

"Well," said Gray Lester, playfully, "we piney-woods, and Black's Peak graziers, and Sandy Hill salamanders can't be worsted by a readjustment of the Districts, and with some little prospect of being benefited, we favor the move of Brother Ransom."

"I see, brethren," said the Bishop, "you are going to keep out of bed at least half an hour after my usual time of retirement; but, as I have a quiet place here, perhaps

I can add a supplement to my nap in the morning to make up lost time, though I have so long trained myself to rise at five, it is doubtful whether I can conciliate the indulgence of old Morpheus beyond that hour. This, I know, is a very important matter, and ought to be done with great care, and we had better begin early. The Districts, I see, are very unequally formed. Here you have one altogether in dense and wealthy territory, and there another altogether in the sparsely-settled and poorer regions; here you have a compact little District, and there a neighboring District of vast dimensions lapping round three sides of it; here one of vast length but little breadth, and there one in the shape of a mushroom with a long stem or a palmetto fan. They look on the map as though they had been thrown together without the least regard to geographical neatness, or that they had been planned just to accommodate some and incommod others as much. Equality among equals is the Scriptural rule, and your Districts should, as far as possible, be so adjusted as to equalize the traveling, labors and support of the Presiding Elders. Some men should not be eased and others burdened. I propose, then, that you appoint a committee of three members of the Council, with instructions to request the assistance of Brothers Robert Cole and Joab Walker, to make out a plan of eight Districts, to be presented next Monday at the opening of our afternoon session. In the meantime, let us keep our own secrets until the proper time comes for their revelation."

"I see no use in having Brothers Cole and Walker added to the committee," said Brother Reedum; "two old superannuated men who will never travel another

Circuit in their lives. I think we can do our work without their assistance."

"Brother Reedum," rejoined the Bishop, "it is true they are both old and superannuated, but in their effective days they have traveled over nearly the whole of your Conference territory, and know more about it than any other two men now living; and as they are superannuated they will not be tempted to consult their own ease or emolument in planning the Districts, but the good of the who'e work."

At the close of these remarks, by the request of Brothers Innis and Lester, the Bishop appointed Brother Ransom Chairman of the Committee on Districts, with the approval of the Council, and Brothers Hartford and Cardin were nominated and elected for the other two. The Council then adjourned.

## CHAPTER IV.

Opening Exercises of Conference—Robert Cole—The Second Class of Undergraduates—Elias Hemphill—Jacob Dodgey—Isaac Everton—Case Laid Over By Request—Class of the Third Year—Peculiarities in the Case of Thomas Bims—Bishop Instructs his Private Secretary—Admonitory Case of Jerry Otis—Council Meets—Difficulty in Selecting a Minister for Cherryville—David Mann—Reuben Edgeworth—Bishop Proposes to Exercise his Prerogatives—James Rankin Returned to Plainville—Why John Burgess was Returned a Second Year—Preachers' Wives to be Taken into the Account in Stationing their Husbands—The Wrong Sort of a Wife—The Right Sort—Allen Tatum Changed to the Mountains for Good Reasons—Clerical Amusements.

On Thursday morning Conference met, pursuant to adjournment. Some one had supplied the Bishop's desk with a handsome gavel with which to call the Conference to order, and a few raps, at the appointed time, put a stop to the earnest and, in some instances, merry conversations that were going on all through the house.

The meeting at Conference is to the itinerants an annual feast of social and intellectual, as well as spiritual, enjoyment, which they appreciate highly. The singing this morning was a little more like congregational singing, as quite a number of ladies were present at the religious exercises with which we always open our daily sessions; though the masculine voices were still predominant. The prayer by Father Cole was not much behind that of the Bishop yesterday morning. The venerable man seems to be ripening fast for heaven. It is sad to think how soon his gray locks may disappear from our annual sessions, and we shall be deprived of the advantages of his mature piety, long experience and close practical observation on all the interests of the Church; but we hope to meet him above, "when all our warfare is past." As our preachers are trained to

promptness, and most of them were known to be present, the Conference excused the Secretary from calling the roll after this morning. The journals of yesterday being read, after some slight amendments, were approved. Reports of committees being called for, the chairmen of each of the three remaining Committees of Examination reported themselves ready to report, except in a few cases, where the under-graduates were not present for examination; whereupon the second class was taken up, and their names called in regular order. The chairman of the committee reported them all good—some of them first-rate—in their studies, except Elias Hemphill, Jacob Dodgey and Isaac Everton.

In extenuation of Brother Hemphill's deficiency, his presiding elder said, that he was progressing finely with his studies until the commencement of the extensive revival on his Circuit, which took up most of his time during the summer months, and until the middle of September, and just as he was ready to resume his books systematically again, he was attacked with a fever which assumed the typhoid form, so that he was not able to study much for six weeks, in consequence of which he went over a part of his course too hastily to undergo a good examination. He had the utmost confidence in Brother Hemphill as a man of strict integrity, both as a Christian and a preacher: and, withal, he loved his books, and was a successful student, and he believed if the Conference would admit him to membership, and elect him to deacon's orders, that he would honorably complete his second year's course of study, and also master that of the third year, by the next Conference.

The chairman of the committee, in further explana-

tion, said, "that he did not wish the Conference to understand him as saying that Brother Hemphill had not read the whole course, for he had done that, and on at least two-thirds of it he stood a good examination ; but he went over the few remaining books so hastily, just before Conference, that his examination on that part of the course was not very satisfactory."

"Mr. President," said Brother Walker, "I see no difficulty in the way of admitting Brother Hemphill to membership in the Conference, and electing him to deacon's orders. There is no complaint of indolence or misspent time against him. The only reasons assigned for his deficiency are, that his time was taken up with an extensive revival in the summer, which is cause of joy to all of us, and by protracted illness in the fall, for which he is not accountable. He has given every evidence, that we have a right to require, of being an obedient son in the gospel."

"After some further discussion as to the effect of such a precedent, he was almost unanimously admitted and elected.

The chairman of the committee reported "Jacob Dodgey very deficient in all his studies, which, it would be borne in mind, was the case a year ago, and that he was then required, by a resolution of Conference, to bring up his first year's course, which, he was sorry to say, he had failed to do. In extenuation of his great deficiency, he told the committee that early in the year he had somehow mislaid his copy of the course of study, and did not know exactly what he was required to study ; and, also, that he had not succeeded in obtaining all the class books in time to read them. But the committee

are of the opinion that there is utterly a fault in Brother Dodgey about this matter, and that his unusual deficiency is the result of indolence and misspent time."

Brother Randall Cardin, his Presiding Elder, and Joel Simmons, his colleague and senior on the Circuit, united in confirming the opinion of the committee as to his indolence and misspent time. They said "he lay abed late in the morning, often to the great inconvenience of the families where he lodged, spent most of his study hours in desultory conversation, or reading the newspapers, or indulging in unclerical pastimes; and without essential improvement on all these points he would not answer the purposes of a traveling preacher. He had been faithfully admonished by his seniors repeatedly, but, while he did not repulse their brotherly admonitions, he gave no encouraging signs of amendment." Several prominent members of Conference spoke against his continuance, and a motion was made and carried to drop him.

The chairman of the committee reported that "the case of Isaac Everton had some peculiarities in it. That he had a good literary and scientific education when he was admitted as a probationer in the Conference two years ago; that he was represented as above mediocrity, for one of his age, in the pulpit; that he appeared fond of books, and read and wrote a good deal, and yet he was as ignorant as a child of the specific course of study assigned him—quite half of the books, he said, he had not read at all. This being the case, the committee can not recommend him either for admission or election; such a precedent would certainly be a bad one, unless we leave it optionary with the under-graduates, either

to pursue *the* course of study prescribed by the Bishops under authority of the General Conference, or *a* course of study of their own selection."

Brother Reedum, his Presiding Elder, said, "that Brother Everton is certainly a good preacher for his age, but he was rather contumacious in regard to the course of study. He says he will read the Bible and Discipline, of course, but the other rudimental class books in theology, made obligatory in the course of study, except Watson's Institutes, are quite unsuitable for a man of his education and talents. As for Wesley's Sermons, he says he can preach as good himself, and he has no taste for reading them, and most of the other books prescribed in the course of study. He prefers such sermons as Blair's, or Irvine's Orations, and as for the 'Course of Time,' he intends to memorize the most of it, so that he can quote whole pages of it in his sermons."

"I think, Mr. President," said Gray Lester, rising to his feet, just as Brother Reedum uttered his last sentence, "that young man needs topping; he is growing too fast, at least in his own estimation, to make a sound, healthy and reliable Methodist preacher."

"Carries more sail than ballast, Mr. President," said Jackson Innis, rising about half way up, and dropping to his seat again.

"He looks more like he had the big head," muttered old Brother Abram Crusty, without rising to his feet at all.

At this point the Bishop gave a rap with his gavel and called the Conference to order, and said: "Brethren, let us proceed quietly and with ministerial decorum.

Brother Everton is a promising young man, but evidently will have to improve on the score of obedience to his superiors in age and experience before he can make a reliable itinerant preacher. Under existing circumstances, you can neither elect him to deacon's orders or admit him to membership in the Conference without violating our rule of discipline, which expressly says, 'Before any preacher shall be admitted into full connection, or ordained Deacon or Elder, he shall give satisfactory evidence to the Conference respecting his knowledge of those particular subjects which have been recommended to his consideration in the course of study prescribed by the Bishops for the candidates for the ministry.' But while we can not override the law of the Church in admitting and electing him, you should deal tenderly with him; and, if he is teachable, his superior talents may be saved to the Church, and in after life he will thank and bless you for your faithfulness and tenderness toward him."

Old Brother Abram Crusty now rose to his feet and said: "A brother who just came in, says that Brother Everton is at the outside of the door in a state of excitement, and is complaining of the Committee of Examination for placing the standard above their own heads, and requiring the young men of the Conference to learn more in two years than they knew themselves. His opinion was that the Conference had better humble his pride and self-conceit by dropping him, and, by so doing, give an exemplary warning to others not to tread in his steps."

As Brother Crusty sat down without offering a formal motion, Robert Cole—now almost universally called

Father Cole, on account of his age and kind, fatherly spirit—arose and moved that the case of Isaac Everton be laid over for another day, as he wished to have a private interview with him before the final disposition of his case. The motion, being seconded by several simultaneous voices, was put and carried by a large majority; Brother Crusty, with several others, however, voting against it. The body of the Conference saw in Father Cole's benevolent countenance and hopeful eyes, as he made the motion, that some plan had entered his mind by which he thought Everton could be saved and the law of the Church preserved inviolate, and they were more than willing to allow him time to try it.

The class of the third year was called next, and the Chairman of the Examining Committee reported the whole class as passable in their course of study, except Thomas Bims. But the way they were numbered by the committee, one, two and three, showed that they were not all alike first-rate.

The Bishop asked for an explanation of the different numbers.

The Chairman replied that "one, was first-rate; two, good; and three, passable."

The Presiding Elder of Brother Bims stated that he had passed through a regular campaign of chills and fevers, which lasted about six months, and which greatly interfered with his studies. He believed, however, that if the Conference would let him pass into the fourth class, that he would make up his deficiencies in the third year's course, in addition to acquiring a knowledge of the fourth during the next year. Brother Bims was most decidedly a prudent, pious, zealous and laborious young

man, and that he had often persisted in filling his appointments when he ought to have been in bed."

With this explanation, commendation and understanding, his character passed, and he was advanced to the senior class.

The time of adjournment having come, several notices were given by the chairmen of committees as to the time and place of meeting. The Bishop reminded the Presiding Elders to meet at his room at half-past three o'clock, P. M. He then took occasion to say to the Conference, "as they were going to commence stationing the preachers for the next year, he wished them to confer freely with their Presiding Elders about any peculiarities in their domestic affairs that ought to be taken into the account in fixing their appointments; or, if they preferred it, they could see him personally or write him a note on the subject, as he wished to make every appointment understandingly."

The Conference then adjourned with the benediction.

At three o'clock the Bishop called me to his room, and requested me to make out a list of all the Charges as they now stood after our revision yesterday, leaving a large margin opposite each name to allow room for marking out the names of the preachers, and inserting others; as we would probably have to make frequent changes and transpositions as we progressed in the work of stationing. He also suggested that I ought to keep a correct list of all the preachers' names, with their ministerial grade affixed, including those just admitted and readmitted, in order to mark each name when put down, or make a counter-mark if it should be taken up again, as it would not do to depend on memory where

so many were concerned.. I informed the Bishop that past experience had taught me the importance of these preliminaries, and they had already been attended to.

Just here Brothers Reedum and Ransom came in, and the Bishop expressed the pleasure he felt in seeing them so early, for he wished to make some inquiry about a very promising young preacher by the name of Jerry Otis, who was attaining considerable prominence in the Conference when he was here twelve or fifteen years ago, but whose name disappeared from the minutes soon after.

“When I tell you, Bishop,” said Brother Reedum, “that he married, located and settled as a merchant in Goldsbury, you will take it for granted that he has not led a very happy or useful life as a minister since then. Of course, there was nothing wrong in the mere fact of his getting married, for where there is no law, there is no transgression, and we have no law, human or divine, against our preachers marrying at a proper time of life, if they do it prudently, and in view of continuing in the great work to which they have previously dedicated their lives. But it was the misfortune, not to say the fault, of Brother Otis, that he married a lady whose education and habits of life were altogether unsuitable for the wife of a traveling Methodist preacher. Soon after their marriage she began to insist on having a settled home, and said she could not see why Mr. Otis could not settle down, and engage in honorable money-making schemes like other men, for the maintenance and elevation of his family. He could still be useful as a local preacher, in filling appointments in his reach on Sundays, and, when consistent with his secular interests, in

attending the protracted and camp-meetings. How much she influenced him by her views, I will not say, but he soon began to see, he said, that he could not continue in the regular pastoral work and provide for his family as he wished to do, and lay up something to fall back on in old age. The result was, he located and engaged in mercantile pursuits. For a few years he seemed to retain his spirituality to some extent, and occasionally preached with apparent zeal and acceptability; but the cooling down process soon commenced, and it was evident to his congregations that he was not as formerly in any of his ministerial exercises. He was successful in business five or six years, until some of his brethren, who had prophesied that he would fail some day, began to think that he might be an exception to the general rule of Methodist preachers, who almost universally become deeply embarrassed, if not hopelessly insolvent, when they leave the pastoral work and engage in money-making schemes. But one financial error succeeded another, and one fraud after another was practiced on his too-unsuspecting nature, by partners and others, while his indulgence of unthrifty and untrustworthy customers all conspired to exhaust his capital and ruin his credit, until he utterly failed, and, after several vexatious law suits, was sold out under the hammer. While the breaking process was going on he became peevish and very unhappy, and almost quit preaching, so that various fears were entertained whether or not he would maintain his Christian and ministerial fidelity; but, since 'the bitterness of' his financial 'death is past,' and he has given up all his property, and settled as honorably with his creditors as they could expect him to do

under the circumstances, he has settled down, somewhat tinged with melancholy, and both himself and his wife appear to have learned obedience by what they have suffered. They both seem humble and truly pious, and say the prime object of their lives hereafter shall be to serve God 'acceptably with reverence and godly fear.' In order to cover expenses and make a little money for necessary purposes, Sister Otis is teaching a medium day-school, made up of their own children and eight or ten from the neighborhood, and Brother Otis has obtained a clerkship at a good salary, so that they hope in a few years to be free from all debt, and ready to give at least the afternoon of life to the regular pastoral work. They look upon their misfortunes in business as providential chastisements for their obstinacy in withdrawing from the great work of soul-saving, to which Brother Otis, from a clear sense of duty, had solemnly consecrated all his time and all his talents. It grieves him much to think that he has lost so much of the prime of his life to no good purpose; for he is now a poorer man than in all probability he would have been had he continued in the regular work."

"Yes," said Brother Ransom, "a man of his piety, courtly manners and popular talents would have been demanded for our best appointments, where the largest salaries are given, and with ordinary economy he might have supported his family in credit, and laid up something for the education of his children, as well as a tittle to *fall back on in old age*, if the use of this common phrase is allowable in this connection. For my part, I would do my duty all along, and have the Lord to *fall back on* in the decline of life. His resources are infinite,

and I have no idea He would require me to give all the prime and strength of my life to the work of the ministry, and then permit me to suffer for what is necessary for 'life and godliness' in old age. Many of our preachers, in circumstances far more unpromising than probably ever would have fallen to the lot of Brother Otis, have continued in the work from youth to old age, and, in addition to a comfortable support all along, have found themselves pleasantly situated in the evening of life. It is true, they got into close places now and then, and have trials peculiar to their calling, but such events are to be found in all the pursuits of life; and I have known about as many poor doctors, and lawyers, and tradesmen in old age, as I have known poor ministers who have been faithful in their holy calling."

"And what a giant in the ministry he might have been by this time," rejoined Brother Reedum, "if he had spent all these lost years in the study of theology and its collateral branches, in connection with the practical duties of the pastoral office. He had a well balanced mind, capable of indefinite expansion and improvement, and all the elements of genuine and lasting popularity in his composition; and if all had been kept upon the altar where it was once laid, he might now have been at the head of his profession, with the assurance of having turned many to righteousness; as it is, he will hardly ever get above mediocrity as a preacher."

"I think," said Gray Lester, who had come in during the conversation, and was now standing with his back to the fire, and looking thoughtfully on the opposite wall, "Brother Otis had a thousand times better have taken his chances with the rest of us poor itinerants than to

'have gained all this harm and loss,' for, after all his years of carefulness, and vexation, and toil as a merchant, he is poorer than the poorest of us, with many reflections to grieve him in the decline of life that we are strangers to. As a man can only go through life once, he ought to come as near doing his whole duty to God and man as he can through the entire journey, and then he may count on a tranquil death."

"Let us hope for the best in the case of Brother Otis," said the Bishop. "He has been sorely chastised for yielding to a very common and plausible temptation to distrust the providence of God and lean upon his own resources; and we may hope that he is now cured, and will do the best he can in his holy calling during the remainder of life. He has fared bad enough, but some of our ex-traveling preachers have fared much worse, for they have come out of their attempted speculations hopelessly insolvent, and have the prospect of dying with unpaid debts hanging over them. Their works shall be destroyed and they shall suffer loss, but may we not hope that their souls will 'be saved, yet so as by fire?' Could any one write the history of our ex-traveling preachers, with that of their families, including their financial reverses and troubles, it would be a history full of instruction and solemn warning to others not to leave the work, to which God has honored them with a call, 'for filthy lucre.' There is a great deal of inconsistency and unbelief, not to say downright infidelity, in the course taken by some men who profess to be 'inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon themselves the office of the ministry in the Church of Christ, to serve God for the promoting of His glory, and the

edifying of His people.' They come to us with a 'woe is me if I preach not the Gospel,' and after the most serious deliberation as to their duty, they take upon themselves the solemn vows of the ministry, in which they promise, in the presence of God and His Church, 'to devote themselves wholly to God and His work—to employ all their time in the work of God—and to spend and be spent in this work;' and then, just about the time we expect to see them getting fully into it, they practically say, by withdrawing from it and engaging in secular employments, 'that it will not pay'—that they have been sent 'a warfare at their own charges'—that God, who has called them to the work and qualified them for it, will not support them in it, though they may do their whole duty. But though so many once promising young ministers have been taken in this evil net, yet is not the net broken! New adventurers still launch out with as much confidence of success as though the fair pages of our Church's history were not overthrown with these pecuniary and moral wrecks! But the brethren are here, and we must get to our appointed work. Brother Reedum will please lead us in prayer."

The prayer being ended, the Bishop remarked that 'We are now entering upon the most difficult and delicate part of our duty as the authorized stationing committee. First of all, brethren, we must look to the interests and present condition of every pastoral charge, and inquire into its special wants. Some circuits and stations in a languishing condition will need ministers of zeal and energy to bring them up; others, where the judicious administration of discipline has been neglected, and strife and divisions have grown up among

the members, will need your most firm and prudent disciplinarians; where you have lately had revivals you will need men who excel in the pastoral department of the work, to look after the young converts, and lead them on in the active duties of a life of holiness; you will need one class of preachers for the more intelligent and refined portions of the Conference, while another class will better suit those who are less intellectual and more impulsive in their religious course; and you will need one class of missionaries for the colored missions, and another class for the missions among the whites in the frontier settlements. First of all, then, let us look well to the work. It will require much self-denial and heavy sacrifices in the way of domestic comfort for some of the preachers to go to the work where we will think their services most needed; but they expect this, and most of them have made up their minds to 'endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.' But we must not, either by indulging local prejudices or by carelessness, or from any other cause, unnecessarily afflict or incommod any brother personally, or in his domestic or pecuniary interests. We must remember that not only the preachers themselves, but their wives, and children, and servants, and even their domestic animals, from the circuit horse to the faithful watch dog, will all be affected more or less by the appointments we here make; and just as far as we can, consistently with the claims of the work, it is our duty to accommodate their reasonable wishes and domestic circumstances. It is a wise provision of our economy, that no man can be a member of this Council until he has been practically a traveling preacher above four years,

and has learned by experience to sympathize with his brethren. I trust it will never be otherwise. Let us now proceed, beginning with the Cherryville District, and put one man down on each District, in any charge that the Presiding Elder who represents it may wish. And now, brethren, let me suggest that while preachers are plenty you had better fill your most difficult places first. Brother Reedum, who will you nominate for Cherryville, this lovely and hospitable town where we are now holding our Conference. I see in the printed minutes that brother Reuben Edgeworth has been here two years, and is now out by the statute of limitation. Who do you suggest as his successor?"•

"Well, Bishop," said Brother Reedum, "Paul once said that he was 'in a strait betwixt two,' but I have, somehow, got in a strait betwixt half a dozen at least. Since the meeting of Conference the members, and especially the officials of the station, have been looking around among the preachers to find one every way suited for Cherryville, and *fortunately* they have found six or eight that will suit exactly, but *unfortunately* scarcely any three of them can agree as to either one of the number. I am truly glad to find that the preachers are so generally popular with the families where they board as to their piety, talents and social qualities. Col. Warham, your kind host, requested me, as I came in, to nominate Jesse Spires, one of your fellow-boarders. He says he has fallen very much in love with him, and after hearing him preach last night at the Baptist Church, he says he is the very man. Old Sister Knowlton says that Elijah Grisham, who boards with her, is the choice of her whole family—that they all heard him

last evening in our Church, and think him quite equal to Reuben Edgeworth. Brother Lambert, the principal class-leader, says that he has been talking with that little man, Sidney Wellins, that boards with him, about the importance of enforcing our rule, requiring a regular attendance on class-meeting whenever practical, and he is so well pleased with his views on the subject, he thinks if he can get him stationed here that class-meetings will be brought up again to the standard of olden times. The Boards of Stewards and Trustees, and Sabbath School Superintendent and Teachers, have all expressed their preferences, and in some instances they have gone so far as to say that no other will answer so well as their favorite."

"I have often found it difficult," said the Bishop, to fill the station where the Conference sits. The dear people seem to think, as a sort of compensation for their kindness in entertaining the Conference, we ought to let them select their pastor for the next year; and in this we would be willing to gratify them, if a respectable majority could fix on the same man; but when they petition for so many, what are we to do? In addition to several verbal requests, I have three or four notes and petitions, very respectfully written, to which sundry respectable names are appended, requesting the appointment of as many different men, and each containing weighty reasons why the man of their choice should be selected."

"I reckon," said Brother Cardin, rather dryly, "that we are as well, if not much better acquainted with the preachers with whom we have labored so long than the people of Cherryville can be up to this date; and I guess

we had better make a selection for them independent of their conflicting preferences."

"In doing that, however, Mr. President," rejoined Brother Reedum, "we will have to go outside of their **expressed** preferences; for if we appoint one of those nominated, all the other petitioners will allow themselves to feel disappointed, and this may engender some unpleasant thoughts, if not words, at the beginning of the year."

"Your views are correct, Brother Reedum," said the Bishop; "but how unfortunate it is that they can not all either agree on one man, or else leave the whole matter with us without expressing their conflicting preferences, as they have so earnestly done. But to the point: Who do you nominate? .

"David Mann," answered Brother Reedum, the good brother that had such a time last year in that little, one-horse station called Burlington. I believe him to be worthy and well qualified, and I want to see him put where such a man as he is, and where such a woman as his wife is, can be duly appreciated, and where he will have a chance to recuperate a little in his finances after the losses of last year. I know him, sir, and I know the people of Cherryville, too, and he is the very man for the place, their antipodal preferences for other men to the contrary notwithstanding."

"Mr. President," said Brother Hartford, "I wish Brother Reedum would just let my preachers alone; I want Brother Mann for Cashville station; and I do not see how I can do without him."

"I'll help him fix that, Mr. President," said Brother Reedum, "when the proper time comes; but I must

have David Mann for Cherryville. He deserves a good parsonage and a liberal support, after such a year as last year was to him ; and then I know he will labor here with a ready mind and will, and the people will soon appreciate him as he deserves." The Council generally concurred in the nomination of David Mann for Cherryville, and he was, accordingly, put down.

"Now, Brother Hartford," said the Bishop, "nominate a man for some place in the Rich Valley District." "Well, sir," replied Brother Hartford, "as a fair exchange is said to be no robbery, I nominate Reuben Edgeworth, late of Cherryville, for Cashville station."

"Now, Brother Hartford," said Brother Reedum with a pleasant smile, "can't you do unto others as you would they should do unto you ? Only a few minutes ago you expressed a wish that I would let your preachers alone. Why do you not let mine alone ? I shall regret to be separated from Brother Edgeworth very much."

"Perhaps, brethren," said the Bishop, "I had better settle one question before we proceed any further. I refer to the ownership of the preachers. I hear you say 'my preachers.' The preachers do not belong to you. They did, in some sense, until the meeting of the Annual Conference ; that is, they were under your jurisdiction. But now they are the property of the whole pastoral work within your Conference territory, liable to go to any charge where their services are most needed ; and what I have you here in council for is to tell me not only where they are needed, but where they are most needed ; not only where they can be useful, but most useful ; and as soon as I get that information clearly from you, I

shall put them down without asking any further questions. Where you seem evidently undecided among yourselves, I shall ask you to vote, that I may know what are the views of the majority; but even in that case I may sometimes feel it my duty to act as umpire in protecting the minority from apparent wrong; for it is possible, in so small a body, for four men to be more influenced by local considerations than one man who looks at the interests of the whole work uninfluenced by any local circumstances. What do you say now to placing the name of Reuben Edgeworth opposite that of Cashville station?"

"They all assent, Brother Secretary, except Brother Reedum, and he is too good natured, after getting such a preacher as David Mann for Cherryville, to object; so put him down."

"Now, Brother Howe," said the Bishop to me, "comes your time to nominate a preacher for some place on the Plainville District." I replied, playfully, "I hope, as I have the writing to do, that the brethren will just let me nominate and put down the preachers I want without debate. As this is all the compensation I claim for my extra labor in the Council, I trust the brethren will grant it."

"This *small* favor, Mr. President," said Gray Lester, "may be all that our Secretary claims, but it is not all he expects to make out of his Secretaryship; for he is taking private notes continually of all that is said and done here, and he has such a *penchant* for scribbling I will not be astonished if he reveals all our secrets some day in a series of articles in the *Advocate*, or even makes a book."

"Well, Brother Lester," the Bishop replied, "I trust we will not say or do anything unworthy of our responsible position for him to reveal about us; and I think I can guarantee, from the care he takes of our minutes, that nothing will see the light before the proper time. As to revealing our secrets in a series of numbers in the *Advocate*, or even in a book, I do not think it will operate unfavorably, provided it is done in systematic language and properly guarded, so as not to mislead the reader. It might be of service, at least, to a few of our preachers—and their wives, too—to know what they compel us sometimes to say about them here. But let us have your nomination, Brother Howe."

"I think," interrupted Jackson Innis, "that we can not grant Brother Howe's request, so modestly expressed, to let him put down his nominations without debate. I know he is rather taciturn, but, sir, he is not dozing over his beloved district."

I replied, "I claim no district now, Brother Innis; I am only representing the one I had last."

"Well, then," said Brother Innis, "the beloved district you last had, and which you are now representing with such unforgetting vigilance. As I was going on to remark, Mr. President, as modest and silent as Brother Howe generally appears, I have no doubt but he has three times as many preachers marked, at least in his mind; and numbered one, two and three, as he expects to need for the Plainville District; and he will first nominate number one, and if he can not get him, he will offer number two next; and if he fails there, he will then take number three as a *dernier resort*."

"It is fortunate, then," said the Bishop, "that most

of our preachers are safe cases, so that even one of Brother Howe's number threes will do well on a circuit; and as he keeps his numbering to himself, I will not be surprised if the people take some of his number threes for number one preachers."

I was just ready to make my nomination when Randall Cardin said playfully, "one word more, if you please, Mr. President. I do not know that we shall interfere much with Brother Howe's nominations, provided he will be pretty liberal with the rest of us; but, sir, he must excuse us for watching him all the time. I know him of old. I have been with him often in the stationing room; and he reminds me of an experienced chess-player, who says little, but always keeps his eye on the board, so as to take advantage of every move of a chessman; and he will keep it up to the very end, so that, if everything is not arranged on the district he represents to suit him, he will be for taking advantage of every change that may be made to better his former charge."

"I hope, Mr. President," said Brother Ransom, "that Brother Cardin does not play chess? He seems to understand the game, from his allusions to it."

"No, Brother Ransom," quickly answered Cardin, "I have never allowed myself to do as small a thing as that since I joined the Church; I knew something about it before."

"To work, brethren, if you please," interposed the Bishop. "I have let you talk long enough. I have no objection to a little pleasantry occasionally to lighten the burdens of the stationing room; and I love to see the Presiding Elders good humored, especially when the

knotty cases have to come up toward the close of Conference; but we must not consume any more of our precious time now in desultory conversation. The work Brother Howe represents will be supplied, after mature deliberation, like all other districts. Now for your nomination, Brother Howe."

"I wish James Rankin returned to Plainville Station," said I. "He did well there last year—was well provided for; and the Church, with scarcely a dissenting voice, wish his return. He has succeeded admirably in getting everything in good working order there, and I confidently expect a prosperous year if he is returned."

"I have no doubt," said Gray Lester, quizzically, "but that Brother Rankin is a number one preacher, or Brother Howe would not have nominated him."

"He is all that, Bishop," said I, "and for that very reason I nominated him, and in that character he is greatly needed in the rising town of Plainville. We have got the vantage-ground there now, and we wish to hold it ever hereafter against all competition."

"We give up, Mr. President, without resistance," said Brother Innis. "It would be wrong to tease Brother Howe's good nature by objecting."

"I reckon, brethren, you have no objection," the Bishop replied; "his reasons for wishing to retain him are too conclusive to admit objections. Put James Rankin down at Plainville."

"Now, Brother Ransom," continued the Bishop, "give us a nomination for Middle River District."

"Well, sir," replied Brother Ransom, "as I am out of the Presiding Eldership by the statute of limitation,

having completed my fourth year on the Middle River District, and as I wish to be excused from the District work, at least until I recruit a little, the brethren will not accuse me of having much personal interest in my nominations, apart from a very natural desire to do the best I can for old friends."

"The brethren will not accuse you, I presume," said the Bishop, "of any personal interest in your nominations, more than they allow themselves to feel in their own. But I will suggest just here that perhaps you had better not set your heart too much upon being excused from the District work. You are going to make an additional District, and your services may be needed."

"But, Mr. President," quickly rejoined Brother Ransom, "we have quite a number of able-bodied young Elders in our Conference that I think would make good Presiding Elders with a little practice, and can labor more efficiently on a District than I can in my broken-down condition, and I must ask to be released."

"Brother Ransom," said the Bishop, in reply, "it is likely, in our judgment, that those able-bodied young Elders can be more safely employed in other work; and, to speak figuratively, I would rather trust a horse already used to the harness, well gaited, and known to be safe, than to be at the trouble and risk of breaking and gaiting an untried one, until necessity requires it to be done."

"But, if you please, Bishop," said Brother Ransom, in rather a supplicating tone, "the idea of placing a man more than half broke down out on a *new* District has something wrong to my eye on the very face of it."

"I did not say," replied the Bishop, "that you were going to make a *new* District, but an additional one. You know the idea is to re-model all the Districts, so as to give them geographical symmetry and neatness, so that you will not have to exhaust all your strength in long rides, so that you will scarcely be able to preach when you get to a Quarterly Meeting."

"I see, Mr. President," said Brother Reedum, "that your hearts are set on re-moddling the districts; but I wish it distinctly understood that I want no change in the Cherryville District. It suits me exactly as it is."

"How do you know, Brother Reedum," jocosely inquired Jackson Innis, "that the Bishop will give you the trouble of traveling the Cherryville District any more? You know that a Presiding Elder may be continued four years on the same work, but he is liable to be discontinued at the end of any year, even the first."

"Well," said Brother Reedum, rather soberly, "I do not know that the Bishop will continue me on the district; but in its present form it will suit any other man just as well as it suits me."

"If you please, brethren," said the Bishop, "let us return from our wanderings. I only intended to give Brother Ransom a hint of what may happen in his case, so that he may not be taken too much by surprise. As for Brother Reedum, we will give him"—Here that unchangeably good humored brother, Gray Lester, interjected: "Yes, give him a good chance to travel extensively in the pine woods for his health."

"No!" retorted the Bishop, assuming a little sternness—for really nothing of the sort seemed naturally to belong to him—"I was not going to say that; but a

good chance to labor extensively and usefully in the vineyard of his Lord and Master, which will be more congenial to his heart than traveling in the pine woods in quest of health. Now, Brother Ransom, make your nomination at once before we wander again."

"I nominate John Burgess to be returned to Oakville, formerly Middle River Circuit," was Brother Ransom's prompt reply.

"I have a word to say there, by your permission, Mr. President," said Brother Hartford. "Brother Burgess, it seems, has been instrumental in bringing the dead to life, by bringing up Middle River Mission, which had long been a dead expense to our missionary treasury, to the grade of a respectable, self-sustaining circuit, and in honor of the event we have christened it with a new name. Now, sir, I have just such a broken down circuit in the Rich Valley District as was that celebrated Middle River Mission; and I must insist on having Brother Burgess there to raise it from the dead."

"I hope, Mr. President," said Brother Ransom, "you will not let Brother Hartford have two chances to my one. He has got one preacher down on the district he represents, and he might wait until his time comes round again. I believe that Brother Burgess ought to be returned to Oakville. He has done more to build up our branch of the church there than all his predecessors, and he has got everything in a healthy and growing condition, and he can return from Conference and take hold just where he left off, and go right on with the edification and enlargement of the Church. The people know that he is eligible for another year, and they will feel greatly disappointed if he is not returned. At the

end of another year he will no longer be returnable for the present, and they will have their minds adjusted to give him up."

"Perhaps, brethren," said the Bishop, "I may as well give you my views about this and all similar cases at once, in order to cut off all unnecessary debate, for I shall return Brother Burgess to Oakville, and shall return all similarly situated to their former charges who are eligible for another year, unless I find paramount reasons for sending them elsewhere. Some revivalists have but little capability for anything else except what is directly connected with the impulsive and emotional part of a revival, so that as soon as the ingathering ceases, their peculiar work is done. I do not say it is necessarily done, for certainly it ought not to be so considered; but I speak in relation to a fact that does exist in regard to some men. In such cases, perhaps, it is best to remove them frequently; but where preachers, in addition to their immediate success in revivals, possess good pastoral and administrative qualifications—a talent for circulating religious books and periodicals, for promoting Sabbath schools and our missionary interests—and evidently have a strong hold on the affections and confidence of the people, they should always be returned a second year, unless there are weighty reasons growing out of their domestic affairs why they should not be, or the imperious demands of the Church require their services elsewhere. No one knows the variegated condition of all the young members as he does, who has witnessed their penitence for sin, and the early joys of their conversion and accession to the Church; no one can find them as

readily as he can, or approach them as unhesitatingly, to give them needed counsel, encouragement, or reproof, if they should need it. No one can know as well as the man who, under God, brought them into the fellowship of the saints, what sort of books to put into their hands in order to establish them in 'the faith which was once delivered to the saints,' and to lead them on at once to the higher grades of Christian experience; and no man will feel the responsibility and constant care for their spiritual safety and prosperity that their spiritual father will feel. I think we often lose a great deal by injudiciously removing our ministers to new fields, when their work is only half done where they have been only one year, instead of returning them to follow up their successes another year. If in any case of this sort there are important reasons why they should not be continued a second year, or why they should be sent to more needy charges, I wish you to state them fully, for where such reasons are not tangible I shall invariably favor their return to their former fields now already white unto the harvest. Put down John Burgess to Oakville Circuit."

I replied, "It is already down, for I saw that was his destination."

"Now, Brother Cardin," said the Bishop, "give us at once your first nomination for Sandy Hill District; for we must try to get once round before supper."

"Please give me," said Brother Cardin, "Carlo Daniels for our new station, made of the town of Sandy Hill and Asbury Chapel. I understand that he has a small family—only a wife and two children—so that he can be well supported there if he will do his work as

well as I think he will. I heard him at the Hickory Grove camp-meeting in the fall, and he is certainly a good preacher."

"He is all that, Mr. President," said Brother Reedum, who had charge of him the two preceding years; "and so far as he is personally concerned I feel reluctant in giving him up; but there are some matters in his domestic relations that make it necessary for him to be removed."

"Please explain, Brother Reedum," was the earnest request of Brother Cardin. "I deprecate the thought of making a blunder at the start in that new station where we shall have as much competition as we can manage."

"What is it, Brother Reedum?" inquired the Bishop; "Do not permit us to act in the dark."

"Well, sir," answered Brother Reedum, "I regret the necessity that compels me to say that Sister Daniels is not, in any sense of the word, the equal of her husband. She is indolent and sluttish in all her house-keeping arrangements; neglectful of her person and of the cleanliness of her children; has no more taste for reading than she has for work, and takes no pains either to polish her mind or manners; withal, she is so full of complaints against the good sisters for neglecting her, as she says, because she is poor and the wife of a poor Methodist preacher, that she soon throws them off from her, and in the course of a few months becomes exceedingly unpopular. The people on Dover Circuit would very cordially receive Brother Daniels a second year, but his wife declares she does not wish to stay with any such people; and she has conducted herself so out of

character as the wife of a minister, and has so abused and defaced the furniture of the parsonage, that every one seems more than willing to part with her."

"How it is to be regretted" said the Bishop, "that she does not read, learn, and inwardly digest Paul's description of what a minister's wife ought to be, as given in 1 Tim. iii. 11. We not unfrequently find good and holy men who might take the very first rank in the ministry were it not for their domestic relations. An indiscreet and hasty marriage has been a lifetime detriment to many otherwise promising ministers of the Gospel."

"Mr. President," said Brother Cardin, "it is useless to discuss this case any further at present. I am sorry that such a good preacher as Brother Daniels is, should have such a clog in the person of his wife; but under the circumstances he will not answer our purposes in Sandy Hill, and I now nominate Josiah Fagan."

"Mr. President," said Brother Ransom, "the thought of parting from Josiah Fagan produces a feeling of sadness, but in the practical workings of our economy the time has come for our pleasant relations to be dissolved. His term on Graysville station has expired by limitation, and so has mine on Middle River District; and, moreover, he is now the property of the whole Conference, and liable to be sent anywhere his services are most needed; and from the representation Brother Cardin has given of Sandy Hill and Asbury, I think Brother Fagan the man for the place."

"Since the subject has been introduced," said the Bishop, "I admit that it is very necessary sometimes to talk about the preachers' wives here, as well as the

preachers themselves—especially the moveable ones—for while some are a great help to their husbands in their pastoral charges, others are of no advantage, and a few hang like an incubus on their usefulness. Where a preacher's family is settled in a home of their own, it is not a matter of so much consequence; but where he has to take them into whatsoever society he may be thrown, it is a matter that ought to be taken into the account in fixing his appointment. What have you to say about Brother Fagan's domestic relations? Are they such as will suit that intelligent and refined society?"

"I am happy in being able to say, Mr. President," responded Brother Ransom, "that everything is favorable in regard to that point. He has in his wife 'a help-meet for him' in truth. Her piety is deep and constant; she has a liberal education, which she is daily improving by solid reading; she is refined and elegant in her intercourse with society; at home she is an example of order and tidiness in everything, and governs her children and servants with religious exactness. She rejoices in the honor of being the wife of a minister; says she married Mr. Fagan because he was a traveling preacher, and because she desired to be the wife of a traveling preacher, in order to extend the sphere of her usefulness as a daughter of the Church. She is anxious that her husband should excel in all that pertains to the reputation and usefulness of an 'able minister of the New Testament,' and makes everthing subservient to this great leading idea of her life. Her own ease, comfort, or prospective wealth, all dwindle into insignificance when compared with this. And she is as laborious and zealous in her sphere as he is in his. Indeed, she is as

good a shepherdess as he is a shepherd, and her Christian influence is extensively felt wherever he labors."

"Enough has been said," replied the Bishop. "You need not write it all down in the minutes, Brother Howe, but be it known that I, this day, in the name and under the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, appoint Josiah Fagin, and Ellen, his wife, to Sandy Hill Station; and may the Supreme Head of the Church go and remain with them and grant them abundant success!" To which the Council responded a hearty Amen!

"A first-rate appointment, that, Brother Cardin," said Jackson Innis, in a suppressed tone. "I know Josiah and Ellen well, and some will have it that she is the best preacher of the two, and that a large share of his success is to be attributed to her popularity and influence in the Sabbath School, class and prayer meetings, at the bedside of the sick, and in all places where it is proper for a daughter of Zion to labor for the good of souls."

"Black's Peak District comes next in order," said the Bishop. "Who wishes to go to the mountains for his health next year? Who wishes to enjoy some of the finest mountain scenery in the country, with an ample field for ministerial labor and usefulness? Who do you nominate, Brother Innis?"

"Well, sir," replied Brother Innis, "we have no little village stations in the mountains for our preachers to be smothered up in—nothing but good, old-fashioned, large circuits and missions, where a man can have both latitude and longitude enough for health, and plenty of room to work. I nominate Allen Tatum for Black's Peak Circuit. I think it will suit all round. He has been two years on that little Monroe Station in the Rich

Valley District, until he is out of health, depressed in spirits, and I am credibly informed does not preach as effectively, by large odds, as he did three years ago."

"I fear," said Brother Hartford, "that he will not be able to stand that work. He looks to be in fair health, but he is always complaining, first of one thing, then of another, and I generally find him low-spirited."

"I don't wonder at that," said Brother Lester. "You have had him shut up in that little one-horse station for two years, on half labor and half rations, without a revival, and I do not wonder at his bad health and depressed spirits. I notice, too, that he has become an excessive chewer and smoker of tobacco—I suppose for the want of something better to do—and I think it likely that this is one cause, if not the prime cause, of his bad health. Send him to the mountains; it will be good for the health of both body and soul; there he will have no time to get low-spirited; and having to preach from three to five times a week to lively Churches, will soon make him feel like a new man."

"I hope," said Brother Cardin, "that Brother Lester will not bear down too hard on chewing and smoking tobacco, as several of us are in the habit of doing the same."

"I said *excessive* chewing and smoking, Mr. President," replied Brother Lester. "If any man can use the weed in the bounds of temperance, healthfulness and decency, I shall not trouble either them or myself about it; but I honestly believe many men are slowly poisoning themselves to death by the intemperate use of tobacco, and I fear this is the case with brother Allen Tatum."

"If you please, brethren," interposed the Bishop, "we will not undertake to settle the tobacco question here this afternoon. It is a habit somewhat indecently practiced at times, and withal is troublesome and expensive, and perhaps in some cases deleterious to health, but a discussion on the subject is not admissible here. The question now before us is, will Brother Allen Tatum suit the work on Black's Peak Circuit? And will the work suit his health and circumstances? If so, we will put him down there at once."

The Council favored it, and his name was entered accordingly.

"The supper bells are ringing, brethren," said the Bishop, "but we can put one down on Pineville District before we adjourn, which will complete our first round. Who do you say, Brother Lester?"

"I have the man ready, sir," replied Brother Lester. "Give me Caleb Ward for Pineville Circuit, for he is the very man we desire and need there. We have no parsonages in the pine woods yet, and our married preachers are compelled to settle their families on little places of their own, where they can help out their poor salaries by raising a small crop at home; and Brother Ward lives convenient to this circuit, and will be well received."

There being no objection, his name was put down there.

"Well, that was quick done," said the Bishop. "How easy it is to get along when we are all agreed. We now stand adjourned until 7 P. M."

As we arose to depart, Brother Innis playfully remarked that it was Brother Lester's turn to take

Jacob Sprouts next year, as he had tired out four presiding elders in five years, so that neither of them would consent to take him again. Brother Lester is a good hand with bad cases, and who knows but what he can make something out of Jacob Sprouts? And what an achievement it would be in case of success?"

"No mechanic," replied Randall Cardin, "can make a good job out of bad materials; and I do not believe there is good timber enough in Sprouts for Brother Lester or any one else to make the right sort of a Methodist traveling preacher out of. I think five years is long enough to work at such a knotty stick."

"Well," said three or four of the Council simultaneously, "if any presiding elder takes him it must be Lester, as he has never had him yet."

"It may be well, brethren," said the Bishop, "to fix on a man for some charge in the Pineville District, as we will commence there on our return trip over the Conference after supper."

"That man," said Gray Lester earnestly, "will not be the aforesaid Jacob Sprouts, with my consent. You acknowledge that no presiding elder that ever had him will consent to receive him again, and that no circuit where he has been will consent to have him returned; and yet you would put him off on the Pinewoods. I tell you plainly the Pinewoods has no use for any such Sprouts?"

"Do not be alarmed, Brother Lester," said the Bishop, "they shall not impose on you. Go, all of you, and take your tea, and say your prayers, and come back in a good humor at seven, and I know we can suit Brother Lester in a preacher."

"I am suited already, Bishop," said Brother Lester, "if you will let me keep the man I have got down **on** my list."

"The man he has already got down on his list!" responded Randall Cardin. "Do you hear that, Bishop? So it seems he has a private list, and has been stationing his preachers without consulting the Council. Gray Lester may be as 'harmless as a dove,' but I tell you he is also 'as wise as a serpent.'"

"Peace be with you all!" said the Bishop, as he closed his door on the retiring Council.

## CHAPTER V.

A Sovereign Remedy Successfully Applied in the Case of Isaac Everton—Equality the Rule in Stationing the Preachers—Jacob Sprouts Again—Easy Work in the Council 'or Several Rounds—Preachers and Circuits Sometimes Injure Themselves by Fastidiousness—Lawrence Bernardo's Unfortunate Marriage Leads Him to Locate—Lunch in the Council—Billy—Methodist Ministers Going Over to the Protestant Episcopal Church, and its Consequences—Incidental Discussion on 'Apostolical Succession.'

Several of the Council came in early Thursday evening, and seemed anxious to get into the Bishop's room. I suggested to them not to rap at the door until they heard him moving, as he was probably still engaged in his private devotions, having been detained at the table by company later than usual. It was several minutes before we heard him putting some additional coals in the grate, in order to have a good temperature in the room at the meeting of the Council. Just as we rapped Brother Hartford came, and seemed to be unusually excited about something, while a glow of heavenly joy which played over his countenance drove away all forebodings of evil tidings.

"Good news for the Council to-night, Bishop!" said he as he entered, and then burst into a flood of grateful tears?"

"What is it, Brother Hartford?" inquired the Bishop. Wiping away his tears hastily with his handkerchief, and trying to smooth his face, he answered, "You remember that young brother, Isaac Everton, whose case consumed so much time in Conference this morning on account of his contumacy in regard to the course of study, and his general appearance of self-importance?"

"Yes, sir," answered the Bishop, "I recollect that case with a great deal of interest. It was laid over on

the motion of Brother Cole; what about it, Brother Hartford?"

"Well, sir," replied Brother Hartford, "I knew that our blessed father in Israel, Robert Cole, had something in view that might interest an angel's heart, when he made the motion to continue Brother Everton's case. Immediately after the adjournment of Conference he took him aside and gave him an affectionate, but plain talk about what the Conference conceived to be wrong in the views he had adopted in reference to the course of study, and the unchristian spirit he manifested toward his seniors in the ministry when they undertook to point out and correct his errors, and then requested an interview with him at his room at 5 o'clock p. m. As I was going to supper, where I have the honor of being a fellow boarder with Brother Cole, I fell in with Brother Everton, whose countenance looked extremely sad, and there was such an appearance of deep humility in his tone and manner as I had never seen in him before. He told me that Father Cole had requested a private interview with him at his room at five o'clock this evening, but his feelings and exercises had been such that he believed he was a little behind the time. I locked my arm in his and endeavored to ascertain the state of his mind as we walked on together, but he made no reply, except that his heart was too full for utterance. I then remarked to him that Father Cole and myself roomed together, but I would vacate the room until their interview closed.

"'No,' said he, 'Brother Hartford, I would rather have you present, for I need an interest in the prayers of all my brethren,' and with this the pentup tears gushed

forth. As we entered the room Father Cole advanced, and putting his arms over Brother Everton's shoulders and around his neck, said, 'God bless you, my son! I began to fear you were not coming; what has detained you?'"

"He answered, 'I have been in my room ever since the dinner hour, praying over this rebellious, proud and stubborn heart of mine—or rather, I should say, trying to pray, for there is so much inbred sin and unbelief in my heart I can hardly feel that my prayers have been acceptable; but I trust my penitence is sincere, and my humility unfeigned. My mind was so absorbed with a sense of my inward backslidings that I did not note the passage of time, and when I arose from my knees I saw that I was belated. But I trust I am not too late to have a prevailing interest in the prayers of yourself and Brother Hartford.'"

"'No, my son,' said Father Cole; 'God forbid that we should sin in ceasing to pray for you. 'Satan hath desired to have you that he might sift you as wheat,' but he will be disappointed this time. The Lord will heal all your backslidings and restore to you the light of His countenance and the joys of His salvation. You have yielded too much, my son, to the remains of sin in your hitherto unsanctified heart, and these 'roots of bitterness have sprung up' in the form of pride, self-confidence, self-will, and a desire to seek that praise, honor and esteem which cometh of man, instead of that which cometh from God only. What you need above all else is to be 'cleansed from all unrighteousness'—to have your heart purified by faith in all the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus, and to have your whole nature brought

under the sanctifying control of the Holy Ghost. So long as you have these enemies in your heart, ever ready to betray you into outward sin, you will be in great danger. O come at once to the 'fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness,' and 'cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, that you may perfect holiness in the fear of God.'"

"'O Father Cole,' said young Everton, 'that is what I need, and what I now feel that I desire above all things. When I was first converted I felt the Spirit sweetly leading me on to seek purity of heart, and an unreserved consecration of my spirit, soul and body to God for time and eternity; and I seemed to be getting on safely until about the middle of my first year in the ministry. It was then the people began to flatter me with the idea of superior talents; and I began to yield to the suggestion that, if I would ignore the course of study adopted by the Conference as unsuitable for a man of my abilities, and take a course of my own selecting, I would soon become one of the most popular preachers in the Conference. But, O my God! what has been the consequence of this spirit of insubordination to my superiors in age and experience, and this pride and vanity which have gained such ascendancy in my heart! The result has been the loss of all spiritual comfort—of that sweet peace I once enjoyed, and that abiding faith in a reconciled God which was my greatest treasure.' Here his tears gushed out afresh as he sank to his knees and begged us to pray for him. Brother Cole beckoned to me to lock the door, which being done we kneeled down near Brother Everton; but before we

began to pray audibly, Brother Cole said to me, 'Brother Hartford, you recollect that precious promise of the Savior in which he says, 'that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.' We will take our blessed Lord at his word, and we will now agree to ask that all the inward backslidings of this dear brother may be healed, and that he may now be fully restored to the favor and image of God,' to which I assented. Brother Cole then led in prayer in a low, but very earnest tone of voice. The case of Brother Everton was fully laid before the Lord; humble confession was made in his behalf; then the prevailing plea was put in, 'if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins,' which was urged with Abrahamic faith. While we were unitedly praying the Divine presence filled the room, and we sensibly felt that 'surely God is in this place.' When we turned to Brother Everton he lay prostrate on the floor, with his face buried in his hands. Brother Cole then commenced singing, in a plaintive and solemn tune, 'O for a closer walk with God;' and while we were singing the second and third stanzas his heart seemed to melt like snow under the rays of the sun; and when we commenced the fourth stanza, 'Return, O Holy Dove! Return,' his whole soul responded, Amen! and as we concluded the hymn a smile of heavenly origin illuminated his countenance, while he exclaimed, 'Glory be to God! I now feel that all is right with me once more.' I left him and Brother Cole there, apparently wrapped up in the visions of God, and I am here without my supper; but

the feast of the soul is so abundant, my bodily wants can very well lay over.’”

While Brother Hartford was relating this thrilling narrative, the Bishop and members of the Council—all of whom got in time enough to hear the most of it—frequently had to ply their handkerchiefs to their eyes, and when he closed the Bishop looked upward and said: “‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten’ that dear young man ‘again unto a lively hope;’ and blessed be God for such nursing fathers as Robert Cole. O, how much better it is to have our venerable sires in the ministry, when they are no longer able to do effective work, watching with fatherly solicitude over our young ministers—correcting the errors of their inexperience, and leading them on to holiness and usefulness—than to have them retire to their homes, and spend the evening of their lives fault-finding, and complaining of being pushed aside, overlooked, forgotten, former services not appreciated, and all that. The light of eternity will be required to reveal all the fruits of Robert Cole’s day’s work, which has terminated so happily in the restoration and renewal of Isaac Everton, a young man of great promise to the Church, now that he is imbued with the spirit of Christ again. If all had felt toward him to-day as Abram Crusty and and a few others did, he might have been driven away from us, and perhaps into despair and ruin. Verily, Robert Cole will have his reward. But see here, brethren,” continued the Bishop, looking at his watch, “it is ten minutes after our appointed time for beginning our session. Brother Hartford, lead us in prayer.”

While Brother Hartford was praying, the whole room seemed to be pervaded with the sensible presence of God, and we all rose up refreshed in spirit.

"Let us commence our evening task immediately, brethren," said the Bishop. "We will begin on the Pineville District, where we left off, and go back to our place of beginning, on the Cherryville District."

"I do not exactly see the fairness of that, Mr. President," said Brother Reedum. "That not only looks like giving Brother Lester, but all the Presiding Elders, two chances to nominate the best preachers yet unstationed to my one. Why not begin on the Cherryville District, as you did at first, and go round the same way?"

"Because, Brother Reedum," said the Bishop, "after giving you, in the first instance, the choice of the whole Conference by beginning at your district, it would be giving you the first choice at the commencement of each round of all the preachers remaining unstationed, which would not be fair among equals. But by beginning this time where we left off and going back the other way, and the next time beginning in the middle and going both ways, and alternating in this way until all are stationed, it gives each Presiding Elder an equal chance to nominate the best preachers left at the time of the nomination."

"Ah! now I see through it," said Brother Reedum, "and I admit its justice. Let us proceed."

"What circuit do you wish filled next in the Pineville District, Brother Lester," inquired the Bishop, "and who do you nominate to fill it?"

"Jacob Sprouts," responded Jackson Innis, before Brother Lester had time to speak.

"No, sir," quickly replied Brother Lester; "any body else in preference to a man repudiated by all his former Presiding Elders and circuits. Before I will agree to that I would rather have the circuit left 'to be supplied,' and depend on employing a local preacher, or a good exhorter, as the supply."

"Well, I do not care," said Brother Innis, "what you do with Jacob Sprouts, so you take him off my hands. He was placed on my District by some management at our last Conference, and I am only commencing in time to get him away; and as Brother Lester says Pineville District is the jumping off place, I thought if we could get him there, by another year we might jump him clear off, some how, and be done with such a pet as he is."

"Stop right there, if you please, brethren," interposed the Bishop. "I do not intend to let Jacob Sprouts be put down anywhere for the present. It has incidentally come to light here that he is not an acceptable traveling preacher, and I shall not permit his name to be written in connection with any circuit until he passes in Conference and comes into my hands with a clean record. Make your nomination, Brother Lester."

"Chester Poplin, for Mill Creek circuit," responded Brother Lester."

"What say you, brethren? All agreed?" inquired the Bishop. "Put him down, Brother Secretary. We shall have easy work now for several rounds, as you have each got what you considered your most important place filled. But about Monday or Tuesday—when

we begin to 'gather up the fragments that nothing be lost'—we shall have a trying time, unless you have no such hard cases as I have found in other Conferences."

We now went to the end of the fourth round with but little discussion, each Presiding Elder nominating without hesitation when his district was called, and all seeming well satisfied with every appointment.

"What a blessing it is," said the Bishop, "to have so many good and fully reliable ministers, and so many good and promising circuits to put them in charge of; ministers willing to be placed in charge of the circuits, and the people willing, and ever anxious, to receive them. And if ministers and people were always what they should be, this would always be the case; and then what an easy time we would have in the stationing room. But some preachers have unpopular ways that they might easily dispense with, if they would, in consequence of which they soon wear out in any locality, and then they must be sent away off somewhere else, to take a new start on new ground to them. And, on the other hand, the people become very fastidious and fault-finding in some places, so that they complain of every preacher sent them, until all the preachers dislike to go there, and we find it difficult to supply them with any suitable man. The people do not know how much they injure themselves by their fastidiousness. I have had good and talented ministers to assure me they would locate before they would go to circuits of this sort, giving it as their opinion that it would be a year thrown away to labor among a people who have no more respect for, or confidence in, their ministers. In this opinion, perhaps, they are wrong. If they would go

to such circuits in the name and strength of Him from whom they have received their commission to preach the Gospel, with a determination to act prudently in all things, and to labor faithfully in public and private, they might be instrumental in bringing about a better state of the Church, and ultimately neutralize the influence of these fault-finders by a host of young converts of a better spirit, and better trained. But let us proceed, brethren. We can probably make another round to-night, and what we do will not have to be done to-morrow. We commence now on the Cherryville District. Who do you nominate as your fifth man, Brother Reedum?"

Brother Reedum replied: "I very much need a suitable pastor for Goldsbury station, and for that charge I nominate Amos Slocum."

"I have a word to say there, Mr. President," quickly interposed Brother Hartford. "Brother Slocum has been with me two years in the bounds of the Rich Valley District, and the people of Monroe station having become acquainted with him, are very solicitous to have him for their pastor next year, and I can not consent to give him up without an effort to gratify their wishes. Brother Reedum, sir, has a very talented young preacher in the Cherryville District, by the name of Lawrence Bernardo, that he seems to be keeping out of sight, and I think he is the very man for Goldsbury. What has Brother Reedum to say to that suggestion?"

"Well, Mr. President," answered Brother Reedum, "I had intended to nominate him for that very place, but I am pained in saying he is not available for any work. I have received a letter from him to-day, in

which he informs me that he will not be at Conference, and requests me, without failure, to ask a location for him for reasons assigned."

"What reasons under the sun can Lawrence Bernardo have for locating?" inquired Randall Cardin. "He is young, healthy, talented, popular, useful; has a handsome estate, and about the middle of the year, I am informed, married a beautiful and accomplished wife. I thought he was just getting ready for an unusually brilliant and life-long itinerant career."

"Brother Reedum," said Jackson Innis, "do not keep us longer in suspense; tell us what strange freak has come over Brother Bernardo to lead him so unexpectedly to a dissolution of his connection with the Conference?"

"Well," replied Brother Reedum, "to sum up all in a few words, as Adam once said, 'the woman which thou gavest to be with me,' has caused the strange freak to come over him."

"Just as my old friend Thomas Stratton once said in the *Advocate*," interjected Gray Lester: "Many a promising young Methodist preacher has been ruined by a pretty face."

"Please let Brother Reedum proceed, without interruption," interposed the Bishop.

"Well, sir, as I was going to say," resumed Brother Reedum, "Brother Bernardo, of his own free will and accord, without consulting with any of his brethren as to the propriety and safety of the step, married an accomplished and beautiful young lady, with some property qualifications in the bargain; but she had never been converted, nor had she ever been deeply convinced

of sin. She joined on probation a short time before her marriage, but really, except some little excitement growing out of her new relations and prospects of an early marriage, there seemed to be but little change in her spirit and deportment. She was still the gay, fashionable, fun-loving young lady she was before. At first she professed to be entirely willing for Brother Bernardo to continue in the active duties of his holy calling, but she soon got to love him so much that she could not bear to have him gone from her sight three or four days at a time, filling his remote appointments. She could not see why he might not be just as useful to locate, and preach on Sundays near about home—she knew he would have large congregations; and then she wished to hear him preach, a privilege she was often deprived of when his appointments were so remote from home. She further reiterated that it had been well enough for him to travel extensively heretofore, but now that he had incurred the responsibilities of a family, he ought to settle himself and provide in time for its support. Moreover, it was his duty to take care of what little property they had, for she had no notion of seeing it wasted by neglect, or spent by frequent removals from place to place all over the Conference. Poor fellow! He soon began to see that his beautiful and lovely wife, whatever other qualifications she had to make life desirable and happy, had not those essentially necessary for the wife of an itinerant preacher. And how could she have, seeing she had never been born in the Kingdom of God? no, not even having yielded sufficiently to the light of God's Word and Spirit to enable her to see her sinfulness and her sins, and feel her need of justifying

and saving grace? It is impossible for an unconverted woman, who is yet in nature's dark night of unbelief and sin, to enter into the sympathies and enjoy the fortunes of an itinerant minister. Whatever may be her personal charms, literary or property qualifications, she is still a child of wrath and an heir of perdition, and can not discern spiritual things. How can she willingly consent to make sacrifices to have the Gospel preached to others when she does not appreciate it enough herself to seek a personal interest in Christ? I have no doubt but Brother Bernardo had got several feeling lectures before an incident occurred in October that completely subdued his resolution to persist in the duties of the itinerancy. He had bidden her an affectionate farewell early one morning, to be gone over two nights, and left her gazing after him until he rode over the hill out of sight. He then called to mind the fact that he had left his umbrella, and, as the weather was a little threatening, he rode hastily back to get it. When he called for it, his wife brought it to the gate, but instead of being wreathed in smiles, she was bathed in tears. 'My dear Clara,' he inquired, 'what is the cause of your sudden and irrepressible grief?' 'You need not ask that question, my dear,' she replied. 'You know what a trial it is to my feelings to have you gone so long; and then I am so ill able to govern the servants, and look after all our other home interests, it seems to me as if everything must go to waste, unless you will consent to stay at home and help me in these necessary matters.' 'Well, I see, Clara,' said he, 'I will have to make other arrangements. Only permit me to fulfill my present obligations, so that there may be no com-

plaint against me for delinquency at Conference, and you shall have my company thereafter;’ and with this he rode away. These facts he relates to me in the letter just received. He has had a fearful conflict about violating the tenor of his call to preach and his solemn ordination vows; but the conclusion of the whole matter is that I will have to ask a location for him, so he need not be nominated for any work.”

“Why did he not tell her before they were married,” inquired Brother Cardin, “what Lorenzo Dow told Peggy—‘that if she ever got in the way of his preaching he would pray to the Lord to kill her?’”

“If you please, Brother Cardin,” replied the Bishop, “that might do for such an eccentric man as was Lorenzo Dow, but it would not be advisable in other cases. Much the safer plan would be for our young ministers to adhere to the apostolic mandate, ‘Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.’ But how sad is the reflection that some who have solemnly consecrated themselves to the work of the ministry, in selecting a partner for life,

‘Are not by stronger motives moved,  
But fondly o'ercome by female charms.’

They seem not to think of the often fatal risk they run by uniting their destiny for life with an unregenerated wife. I am always glad to know when our preachers of suitable age are married, when I can be assured that they are suitably married, but many a hapless itinerant has had both his happiness and usefulness blighted for life by an injudicious step here.”

“I predict,” said Brother Innis, “that honey-moon will not last always with sister Clara. Brother Ber-

nardo will engage in secular business without much experience in that line, and he will soon find new and unexpected trials; it is to be feared that, like the majority of such cases, he will lose his spirituality—his abiding sense of the presence and favor of God, and his bright hopes of heaven. Then, in all probability, he will become peevish and passionate in his family government, sour-spirited toward his neighbors when they say or do anything that displeases him; and I shall not be surprised if sister Clara does not wish him back in the Conference some day, just to have him relieved of his melancholy and dejection, and restored to his former tranquility and agreeableness."

"I was just thinking" said Gray Lester, "what a prospect he has in Clara of having a family of Methodist preacher's children trained up for God and heaven. 'If the blind lead the blind, will they not both fall into the ditch?' How can she assist him to 'bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' when she knows nothing about it experimentally herself?"

"Come, Brother Lester," said Randall Cardin, "do not try to penetrate too far into the future. Let us hope and pray that she may become a true Christian before she has any children to train up for God and heaven."

"Pardon me, brethren, for stopping this desultory conversation," said the Bishop. "I admit its important bearing, but it is not altogether relevant at this time. You must not think too hard of Sister Bernardo; she wanted a good, safe husband, and it is rather complimentary to the fraternity that she preferred a Methodist preacher to all others. If any wrong was done, it was done by Brother Bernardo, who violated what he

knew to be the scriptural and disciplinary rule in such cases. But what is done is done! They are now legally husband and wife, and ought to remain so until parted by death. Let us pray that Sister Bernardo may be speedily converted, and that her fine person, literary attainments and wealth may all soon be laid upon the altar of Christianity and consecrated to holy purposes. Brother Howe, put down Amos Slocum to Goldsbury Station."

"Ah! here comes my friend Billy," exclaimed the Bishop. "When he was up to recruit our fire a short time ago I slipped a note into his hand to Sister Warham, stating that Brother Hartford had been circumstanced out of his supper by a very pleasant affair, which I would explain to her at another time, and requesting her to send him up a lunch; and here it is. Our time is not quite out yet, but we have done a good evening's work, and we may safely adjourn. Remove your portfolios, brethren, and let Billy set his waiter here on the center table."

"Lunch for Brother Hartford, indeed!" ejaculated Jackson Innis, as Billy deposited his full waiter on the table. "Here's enough for all, and to spare."

"Yes! just like Sister Warham does such things," rejoined the Bishop. "Here we have nice slips of light bread, well buttered, soda biscuit, warm toast, the best of cheese, sardines, and other tempting articles in the line of pastry, sweetmeats, etc. Rather a dangerous lunch for men given to appetite so late at night, but let us partake with temperance and thankfulness." Then, uniting his hands together, he requested Brother Hartford to return thanks to the Giver of all good. "Now,

help yourselves," said the Bishop. "I will partake lightly, as I wish about six and a half hours unbroken repose to-night."

"Well, Brother Billy," said Josephus Hartford, "you have brought us an overflowing waiter, yet in my case there seems to be one thing lacking, as I had no supper this evening."

"Wat's dat, Massa Hartford?" inquired Billy, with earnestness.

"A cup of coffee, my good brother," replied Hartford.

"O!" said Billy, "I gwine down now for dat. You see I left it on de fire, just 'ginning to bile; I 'spect it done bile enough now; I gwine down for it." True to his word, the coffee was soon on hand for all that wished, and Billy became, *ex-officio*, a member of the Council until its dissolution for the night.

"I am glad of this opportunity for social converse, brethren," said the Bishop, "for I desire to obtain some information about three of your ministers who left you some years ago, and took orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church. Why did they leave you, and what became of them?"

Brother Reedum replied: "Brother Lester can give you the subsequent history of Charles Neptune; Brother Cardin can tell you what little is known of Philo Clarkson; and I can give you some account of Nichols Williamson."

"If you please, brethren," said the Bishop; "it is suggestive to trace the history of men after such extraordinary changes in their church and ministerial relations. Were those changes followed by an increase

of personal holiness and ministerial usefulness in the conversion of sinners, and in the edification of believers, with the addition of pecuniary advantages, or did they tend to contrary results? What have you to say about your friend, that was, Rev. Charles Neptune, Brother Lester? Give us a brief outline of his history."

"Well, sir," replied Brother Lester, "the first I knew of him he came up with a recommendation for admission on trial in our Conference. The brethren who represented him said that he had led a wicked, desultory and rather unprofitable life up to the time of his conversion, which took place when he was about thirty years old; that his conversion seemed to be genuine, and his call to the ministry had the usual evidences of a divine origin; and that he was a man of good physical and intellectual abilities for the work of an itinerant preacher; whereupon he was duly admitted among us. During the few years he labored in the ministry with us his appointments were eligible, and he had every opportunity of being useful. He was a bold, dashing declaimer, and manifested a good deal of zeal in discharging his ministerial duties. But he carried more sail than ballast—thought his opinions infallibly right, and those of his brethren wrong, when they differed from his. He soon began to complain of the want of a competent salary, and could not see how a man could support his family creditably in the Methodist traveling connection. He was an unsuccessful financier, and kept up his former habits of living above his income. About this time the Bishop and clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church of this diocese seemed to

be looking around for clerical recruits, and made flattering offers to several of our young ministers, provided they would leave this outside sect, as they called the Methodist, and enter the true Church, and receive regular ordination from the only legitimate successors of the apostles. Their flattering speeches and sugar-coated sophisms had no effect on our ministers who had studied the subject of ordination in the light of the Scriptures and well authenticated ecclesiastical history, except to disgust them more and more with the baseless assumptions of the successionists. But Charles Neptune was a susceptible case; he had not enough of the spirit of self-sacrifice and true devotion to the cause of human salvation to endure the privations and labors of the itinerancy. He soon hunted up quite a list of old and stale objections to our Church polity—objections that had been refuted a thousand times by appealing to the Scriptures and facts of history; but he urged them with as much pertinacity as though they had just come to light. In the meantime he saw flattering prospects ahead in the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal Church. He would probably get a salary that would support his family in a style suitable to his views and tastes—at least he would not be worsted on that point. Then he could be a settled pastor, without the inconvenience and expense of moving every two years; could collect a permanent congregation, where he could become acquainted with all his parishioners, and be prepared to minister to their spiritual wants both in public and private. It was true that his literary and theological training had not been such as the Protestant Episcopal Church professedly requires of her candidates

for the ministry, but they were willing to make his, and all similar cases, an exception to the general rule, provided he would apply himself diligently to study during his novitiate. He thought of another remedy for his defective education under the canon of the Church which requires the reading of all sermons from a previously prepared manuscript. If he could not prepare original sermons of a very high order, from the thousands of good sermons already extant he could transcribe as many as he would need, and by making such verbal changes as he might deem necessary he could shield himself from the charge of plagiarism. The denouement of the whole matter was, that he went over to the Protestant Episcopal Church without even calling by to bid his Methodist brethren a respectful farewell. They had been expecting it for some time, and so equivocal had been his course for several months, that they received the intelligence of his exit without much regret, except on his own account. As soon as it could be done legally, he took orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and was installed rector of St. Andrew's Parish, which, except just members enough for a legal vestry, consisted mostly of empty space. But it was located in the center of his last pastoral charge among the Methodist, and it was confidently believed that he would soon lead quite a number of his Methodist brethren with their families into what he now declared to be the only true apostolic church of our Lord Jesus Christ now on earth. His bright anticipations in this respect, however, were not realized, except in two unimportant cases. He found the Methodists too loyal to the Church that had hitherto cared for their spiritual interests, and

had been instrumental in warming them into spiritual life, to leave it for a colder climate and less productive region. They felt perfectly at home in the Methodist Church, being thoroughly satisfied as to the evangelical character of her doctrines and polity. Charles Neptune, however, was for a time buoyant with hope, and, possessing a good deal of energy, he went to work in earnest. With gown and surplice, prayer-book and manuscript sermon, he was in his pulpit at all regular hours for public worship. In the prayer meeting, Sabbath-school and private circles he often availed himself of his extemporaneous habits acquired among the Methodists, and lectured, exhorted and prayed with apparent earnestness. In addition to all this, he made a considerable show of caring for the poor and visiting the sick in his parish; and during the prevalence of a fatal epidemic he got more puffs in the secular papers than all the Methodist preachers in the vicinity for his untiring attention to the sick and distressed of every grade."

"Do you know the reason of that?" interjected Brother Innis. "The Methodist ministers do not need any puffing—their 'own works praise' them. Except where their providential circumstances are such as to render it highly inexpedient for them to remain, I know of no ministers that face the dangers of cholera, yellow fever, and other fatal epidemics as unflinchingly as they do; and the mortuary statistics will show that we have lost a hundred per cent. more of our ministers in epidemics than any other branch of the Church. But some men are like paper kites—they can not rise from the earth without a wind, and they can not be kept up without some one tugging at the cord all the time;

and hence those who accomplish the least in the way of charity and good works often get the greatest number of puffs in the secular papers."

"Let Brother Lester proceed with his narrative," said the Bishop. "What was the subsequent history of your departed Brother Neptune?"

"Well, sir," replied Brother Lester, "it reminds me of a Yankee whittling a stick of white pine until he whittles it away to the tip end of nothing. The Rev. Charles Neptune tried every way to collect a congregation in St. Andrew's Parish that would be respectable in size, intelligence and wealth; but somehow he could not get the self-thinking and self-willed people to appreciate his superior ministerial services in his new Church relations; and despite all he could say or do they would still flock to their old places of worship, where they still enjoyed a high degree of spiritual prosperity. Finally a bright thought seemed to strike the Rector of St. Andrew's. He would relinquish all idea of making any further systematic efforts to proselyte from other churches and congregations, and go to work among the outsiders, and see if he could not get them to rally to his standard. His finances were getting lower than they were among the Methodist, and something must be done to replenish his wardrobe and larder and pay his rents, or he would be compelled to withdraw from the parish, as his family could not subsist on clerical dignity and newspaper puffs. Already it was being whispered round that he had not bettered his finances or augmented his usefulness by leaving the Methodist *Sect* and joining the *true Church*. 'Desperate diseases will justify the use of desperate remedies,' said he to

his wife, as he came in from marrying a couple where he had hoped to get a large fee, but received only two dollars, with many thanks from the happy couple, for his services. 'We can not live at this rate. I intend to go among the outsiders and familiarize myself with them in their places of business, at their homes, on the street corners, at the market-house, in their reading rooms, and even in their drinking saloons, and see if I can not, in this way, collect a congregation that will be respectable, at least in numbers, and in the support of their minister.' All this would have been well enough on the part of Mr. Neptune, if he had gone about it in the spirit of a true minister of Jesus Christ, and used only such measures as the Scriptures authorize for the reformation and salvation of the people; but unfortunately he seemed to think that mere social visiting, with flattery, jokes and laughter would draw the people to his Church. In a short time he was seen daily on the streets, and in other places of public resort, talking with the talkers, joking with the jokers, laughing with the laughers, smoking with the smokers, and even drinking with the drinkers. Fears were soon entertained that he was becoming too fond of the excitement of the bar-room, and one of his former Methodist brethren ventured to suggest to him his danger, and the influence his example was exerting against the temperance reformation. He coolly replied that there was no rule in his Church against social drinking, and he thought he might use it as a means of drawing people to hear him preach. In this last scheme for collecting a congregation he was sadly mistaken, for though the wicked boasted of his social habits, and compli-

mented him for his cleverness, but few attended his Church; and some who did generally sent for the Methodist ministers to visit their sick, pray for their dying, and bury their dead. Being convinced, in the course of a few years, that he could not succeed in St. Andrew's Parish, he left our commercial emporium, and retired to an unimportant country village, where he spent a year or two in almost fruitless efforts to build up a Church, and then died, leaving his family poor and dependent. He seemed to become more sober-minded, humble and spiritual toward the last, and we charitably hope that he was ready for the Church Triumphant when he was called away from earth."

"Now, Brother Cardin," said the Bishop, "let us hear of our ex-Brother Philo Clarkson; but, perhaps, you should be as brief as convenient to do justice to the subject, as I see the brethren are about through with their lunch, and may wish to retire early."

"Do not be uneasy, Bishop," said Brother Hartford; "we all are anxious to hear the subsequent history of those brethren, after they left the Church of their early love. It may lead us to place a higher estimate on our itinerant system, which has been so much complained of by others as oppressive to the preachers."

"Proceed, Brother Cardin," said the Bishop.

"Well, sir," answered Brother Cardin, "I need not be tedious, for I do not know enough about Philo Clarkson to consume much time in telling it. He was admitted into one of the Northeastern Conferences about 1826, and was an effective traveling preacher near twenty years, filling various important appointments on circuits, stations and districts. He was a man of

good literary and theological attainments ; quite popular in his social habits ; and, so far as a few sermons which he often preached were concerned, he was above mediocrity as a preacher. In many places he had been extensively useful as a revivalist, and many were the seals to his ministry. But as he advanced in life he seemed to become increasingly egotistic, and to place a higher value on his talents and services as a minister than accorded with Christian meekness and humility. He became more extravagant in his expenditures, and more exacting on the people for an increase of salary. As he had transferred to our Conference in the maturity of middle life, after having seen much service in the North, he seemed to think we ought almost to lose sight of our home preachers, who had grown up in our midst, and who had borne the burden and heat of the day in building up our comparatively young Conference, and give him the preference in every way he might be inclined to ask it. His appointments were such as he desired, and his support as ample as it well could be, all things considered ; but he soon became dissatisfied—got into difficulties with his official members—complained that the Church was not doing a good part by him, considering his age and ability as a preacher—and the natural consequence was, he declined rapidly in the estimation both of the ministry and membership of the Church. Tempting offers were made him if he would take orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and he soon began to yield to the solicitation, as a means of avenging his imaginary wrongs, as well as securing to himself a permanent location, and a rich salary for long years to come. He seemed to be look-

ing about for some plausible pretext to change his Church relations, when the great agitation on the subject of slavery took place in the General Conference of 1844. After hesitating for some time—for he seemed afraid to take a step liable to so many objections, and involving such fearful responsibility—he finally gave it as his opinion that the Methodist Episcopal Church was going all to pieces, and he would make his escape in time from the crumbling fabric, and accordingly left in haste."

"Quite a brave soldier, Bishop," interjected Jackson Innis, "to leave the Church that had made him all he was, in the time of her peril! Thanks be to God that everybody was not of his opinion! And we already see enough to satisfy us that instead of the Methodist Episcopal Church crumbling all to pieces, it is only divided into two separate, efficient and prosperous jurisdictions, and bids as fair to live and flourish to the end of time as any other branch of the General Church."

"Ah! that was only the pretext and occasion for carrying out improper feelings, which had been indulged until they had become deeply imbedded in his heart," said Brother Ransom. "It was impossible for a man of his intelligence to live and labor as a minister for a quarter of a century in the Methodist Episcopal Church before he could find out that he was in the wrong place, and ought to repudiate all he had professed and done, in order that late in life he might start anew in another Church. And if it took him that long to find out that the Methodist is not a true Church, and that the Protestant Episcopal is, neither himself nor any one else ought to have much confidence in his ability to detect

error or apprehend truth. Excuse me, Brother Cardin, for interrupting you. Please proceed."

Brother Cardin resumed: "After he had left us, and took orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church, he was like a man who had sold himself out of house and home, without knowing where he could get another. Those of his clerical brethren in the Church he had just entered, who were already provided with parishes, did not appear at all disposed to yield their comfortable berths to the new-comer, but told him promptly that he must look out for himself—the whole country between the Atlantic and Pacific was before him, and there were large scopes of territory where there were no Episcopal Churches, and he must select his location and go to work to build up for himself a church and congregation. Some pecuniary aid was granted him for present necessities, and he commenced wandering from place to place in search of an eligible location; and the very last I heard of him, years after he left us, he was going glimmering away toward the far West, in search of a call to preach the Gospel, quite depressed in spirit and low in purse. Where he now is, I know not. If he is not already in heaven, I trust, through the abounding mercy of God in Christ Jesus, he may get there. If he had remained with us, and maintained the right spirit and made full proof of his ministry, we could have given him comfortable quarters, with a good prospect for usefulness to the end of life. But as it is he has dropped out of sight, and, so far as we know, is now unknown to fortune and to fame."

"Brother Billy, stir up the fire," said the Bishop;

"we have yet time to hear a succinct account of Nichols Williamson from Brother Reedum."

Brother Reedum, in his usual style of commencing a subject without circumlocution or formal introduction, said: "Nichols Williamson was the son of Methodist parents, and enjoyed as many early advantages, religiously, intellectually and pecuniarily, as falls to the lot of the most favored. When about sixteen years old he was powerfully converted at one of our forest camp-meetings, and from that time was noted for his deep, uniform and earnest piety. While completing his college curriculum he was licensed as a local preacher, and soon acquired considerable celebrity for maturity of thought, fluency of speech, and the pathos which often attended his preaching. Soon after leaving college he was admitted into our Conference as a probationer; and a blunder committed in his first appointment, I have always believed, was the entering wedge to his final perversion from the Church, which, under the Divine blessing, had made him all he was as a minister. It was a weakness in our old Presiding Elder, Joel Sledge, to pet talented and promising young men too much; hence, instead of having Williamson placed on a circuit as the junior of some safe and experienced minister, where nearly all of our truly great men receive their early training, he had him placed in charge of one of our most important and difficult city stations. He was continued in the same city during the four years of his connection with our Conference. During the first two years he got along with tolerable propriety and acceptability, but after that he began to show symptoms of thinking more highly of himself than he ought. He

put on an extra amount of dignity, became somewhat lordly in his bearing, got into difficulties with his official Board, began to see many disadvantages in the Methodist itinerancy to a man of his superior culture and aspirations; and as to the salaries paid to the pastors in our Church, they were altogether inadequate to his demands. In the meantime he was duly baited by the rectors of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the city. They no doubt saw, from the restlessness he manifested as a pastor in our Church, that he was an impressible subject. All the stale and oft-refuted objections to the origin and history of the Methodist Episcopal Church were duly placed before him, while the superior advantages of a rectorship in the Protestant Episcopal Church were painted in the most fascinating colors, and held up to his already perverted vision. A man of his superior educational and oratorical talents would be invited to the very best parishes, and would always command the largest salaries, so that, instead of being a drudge in the Methodist itinerancy, he could become a settled pastor, surrounded with as many advantages as heart could wish. It must have occasioned a man of his sense and former piety some bitter pangs at first to think of leaving the Church which had done so much for him, and the Conference containing the very men who had prayed, counseled and wept with him at the altar the night he was converted; but when the mind becomes overcast with the dark shadows of error, and perverted by illusive dreams of happiness never to be realized, the moral feelings all become callous, and men become capable of any amount of ingratitude to their former benefactors, and of grasping at anything that promises their own

elevation, regardless of the pain and injustice they inflict on others. Having once permitted his mind to entertain the plausibility of changing his Church relations, Nichols Williamson was not long in consummating the deed, and at our next Conference his name was appended to the question, 'Who have withdrawn from the connection this year?'

"It must have created quite a sensation," the Bishop remarked, "to have so many of your preachers leave you in such rapid succession? It must have been a sort of epidemic that got among you."

"No, sir," rejoined Brother Reedum, "their exit did not create any important sensation among us. We had done well without them before they came among us, and we believed we could do very well without them when they left us; and their withdrawal was only like taking a bucket of water from the lake—there was a little splash and ripple at the time, but the vacuum was immediately closed up, the sound of the splash soon died away, the ripple was soon spent, and the abstracted water not missed at all. Or rather it was more like a burial at sea,

‘One solemn plunge and all was o'er;  
The sea rolled on as it rolled before.’

They probably thought their withdrawal was fraught with such momentous consequences that they looked back as they left us to see if the vast fabric of Methodism was not tumbling to atoms for the want of their support and patronage; but I suppose they have learned by this time that we can go on and prosper without their assistance, and even in the face of their opposition."

“But I broke the chain of your narrative, Brother Reedum,” said the Bishop. “Please give us the subsequent history of this self-exiled brother from the great Methodist family.”

Brother Reedum continued: “I have a very different account to give of him from that given of Messrs. Neptune and Clarkson. Nichols Williamson has been much admired and sought after by Protestant Episcopalian Churches ever since he passed his novitiate and received his duplicate ordinations at the hands of their Bishops. He was soon installed rector of a wealthy parish in one of our western cities, with a salary of four or five thousand dollars a year—so said rumor. After filling the rectory of that parish a number of years, another wealthy parish in a distant city overbid his former charge, and succeeded in getting him away, which is the latest item of news I have concerning him. I suppose their editors occasionally mention his name in their Church papers, but they take up so much space in abusing and misrepresenting the ‘Sects,’ as they are pleased to call other Churches, and especially the Methodist, and in eulogizing their little Church instead of the Gospel, that I have ceased to read their periodicals long ago. If Mr. Williamson had remained with us, and done as well as he certainly was capable of doing, he might have been favorably known throughout the length and breadth of the land; but, as it is, his fame is confined to narrow limits. He is, however, esteemed a great and successful minister in the Protestant Episcopal Church.”

“I would like to know,” inquired Randall Cardin, “in what his ministerial success consists? If it is confined

mainly to his popularity and rich salaries, however well that may answer for this world, when his days on earth are ended, and he appears before his final Judge to give an account of his stewardship, it will be lighter than vanity. I would like to know if he has been successful in the awakening and conversion of sinners, and in the edification of the Church in 'righteousness and true holiness?' I would be glad to know whether he has counseled, prayed with, and wept over penitent sinners, as the Methodist ministers did over him, before and at the time of his conversion? I understand he has been somewhat successful in picking up stragglers and renegades from other Churches, but that he has scarcely had the semblance of an evangelical revival in either of his parishes. I fear when the 'sheaves' are brought up by those who have 'sown in tears,' that he will not have many suitable for the garner of God. And as to his greatness, of which Brother Reedum speaks, I have only to remark that this thing of greatness is a very comparative something. Some men are very great in some places that would be very small in others. Mr. Williamson may stand at the head of his profession where he is, but what would be the measure of his greatness when compared to that of the leading ministers of our Church? 'It would grow smaller by degrees and beautifully less' by the comparison."

"But then you know, Brother Cardin," said Jackson Innis, rather quizzically, "that Mr. Williamson's Church denies our being the true Episcopal Church, or any part of it, in the United States, and claims that honor exclusively for the Protestant Episcopal Church."

"Yes, I know that," quickly responded Brother Car-

din, "but neither their denials or claims will ever make it so. The truth of history shows that the Methodist Episcopal Church is the oldest Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and is the legitimate successor, both as to priority of time and importance, of the defunct English Episcopal Church, which existed here until the treaty of peace at the close of the revolutionary war. Previous to that time the Methodist in the British American Colonies was a body of earnest and successful reformers *in* the Episcopal Church, and all who were received into their societies were duly informed that they now belonged to the Episcopal Church, and must go to the parish ministers for the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and thousands were added to her communion by her evangelical sons called Methodists. This was the state of affairs at the close of the war, which effectually superceded both the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction of England in this country, and left us free to adopt our own forms of government, both civil and ecclesiastical. The clergy of what had been the English Episcopal Church, being mostly royalists, either returned to England during the war, or ceased to exercise their ministerial functions, so that the Episcopalian in America, including the Methodists, were left as sheep without anything like an adequate supply of spiritual shepherds. The Methodist Episcopalian, being almost universally republicans, adhered to the American cause, and continued their evangelical labors in all parts of the now independent colonies for the reformation and salvation of the people, and were the first, as a religious body, to present, through their Bishops, their congratulations to General Washington

after his inauguration as President of the United States, and their hearty approval of 'the most excellent Constitution of these States.' But the Methodists were Episcopalian still, and, as the English Episcopal Hierarchy had been totally dissolved and broken up by the results of the Revolutionary war, they applied to Mr. Wesley, who was still the acknowledged leader of the Reforming Episcopalian both in England and America, to draw up for them a form of Church government suitable to their pressing wants and new circumstances. Mr. Wesley, though still an Elder, or Presbyter, in the Church of England—and in communion with which he died—had long since repudiated the dogma of an unbroken chain of Episcopal ordinations from the Apostles as a fable, which he had once zealously espoused, but of which he had been heartily ashamed ever since he read Lord King's account of the primitive Church. He therefore felt himself as fully authorized to ordain ministers for America as any man on earth, which he proceeded to do, assisted by other Presbyters of the Church of England, and sent them to America with an Episcopal form of Church government, which was adopted by the Methodist Episcopalian in the United States; and, from its adoption, in 1784, they took the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. The prefix of Methodist in the style of our Church was simply to distinguish the reforming Episcopalian from the anti-reform, anti-progressive, high church Episcopalian, who, about five years after our organization, united their disjointed fragments in America into what has since been known as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

Now we had as good, and I think better, reasons for prefixing Methodist to the name of our Church than they had for prefixing Protestant to that of their Church. Take off both prefixes and we are both Episcopal Churches, with these advantages on our part, that we are five years the older, and at least ten times the larger and more influential in 'reforming the continent and spreading scriptural holiness all over these lands.' I think we may, without presumption, or contradicting the well-authenticated history of the times, claim to be the true, evangelical, Episcopal Church of North America. As to the oft-repeated assertion that our forefathers withdrew from the Episcopal Church, it is a mere fabrication. There was no Episcopal Church here at that time to withdraw from. Its previous existence had been dissolved by the change in our Government, and our forefathers were left at full liberty to reorganize an Episcopal Church suited to their new civil government and their new circumstances. This they proceeded to do, with great unanimity, in 1784, about five years before any other Episcopal Church was established in the United States. But now our younger sister, the Protestant Episcopal Church, though five years our junior, and quite dwarfish in size, claims to be the only true Episcopal Church in the North American States, and is perpetually teasing her elder sister, the Methodist Episcopal Church, to return to her as the Mother Church! Mother Church, indeed! So far from it she is our younger sister. We can not return to her, from the fact that we never came away from her. And should any think of the plausibility of our going over to her, a moment's sensible reflection will show the utter

impossibility of such a movement. Her premises are too small for the reception and entertainment of so large a communion as ours. It would be like an attempt to force the descending waters of the mighty Mississippi river into one of its smallest outlets—it would so overflow its banks and all the adjacent country that the identity of the outlet would be totally lost. The way our little sister, the Protestant Episcopal Church, treats us, and the main objects upon which she spends most of her time and energies, neither exhibits sound policy or a true Christian spirit. She publishes and treats us as a mere outside sect—beyond the pale of the covenanted mercies of God; will not invite our ministers to her pulpits, nor, as a general rule, receive the sacrament at their hands; and the great object of her movements seems to be, not to do her part in ‘reforming the continent and spreading scriptural holiness all over the land,’ but to lay plans, and devise ways and means whereby the Sects—as she calls other Christian Churches—can be run down and brought into the true Church, as she styles herself. Now, if she woald desist from this ungracious and very unproductive task and go to work, in union with other evangelical Churches, to teach transgressors the ways of God and get sinners converted unto him, she might also be a prosperous Church; but as it is, she is far in the rear of other leading denominations, and especially her elder sister, the Methodist Episcopal Church, which numbers now a million and a half of communicants on the same territory where her little sister only numbers about one hundred thousand. We, however, acknowledge her as one of the Episcopal family, and shall treat

her kindly; as we have always done; for though we are sometimes compelled to throw off her attacks on us in a summary way, it is done purely in self-defense, and not to injure her."

"Well, brethren," interposed the Bishop just here, "you have kindly given me the information for which I asked, by relating the histories of the three ex-METHODIST preachers referred to. So far as I am concerned you may now feel at liberty to retire, if you wish to do so. The conversation is indeed interesting, and in accordance with the historical facts in the case, but as we are all of the same opinion, the discussion is necessarily all on one side."

"If you please, Bishop," said Gray Lester, "while Brother Cardin is on the subject of our relations with the Protestant Episcopal Church, I would like to have his views on what they consider the main point of difficulty between us—that of ordination." Then, turning to Brother Cardin, he said, "You know, Brother Cardin, the Protestant Episcopal Church contends for an unbroken succession of Episcopal ordinations, from the Apostles to the present time, in their church, and unchurches us because we have adopted presbyterian ordination as the most valid and scriptural."

"I know that," quickly replied Brother Cardin. "But as to their assumed chain of Episcopal ordinations from the days of the Apostles without a break, it is a fable of comparatively recent invention; not only unsupported by the New Testament Scriptures and the primitive apostolic churches, but contrary to the teaching of the former and the example and recorded history of the latter, as well as the example and history of the

greater and better portions of the Church in all ages. We do not deny, nor do we wish to conceal, the fact of our lineal descent from the English Episcopal Church; but our mother church was far from being uniform in her belief of the now pompously claimed, unbroken chain of Episcopal ordinations from the Apostles to the present time; and not only many of her most intelligent laity and clergy denied it as unsupported, either by Scripture or ecclesiastical history, but many of her best bishops wrote against it, proving from the most authentic sources that it is a mere human invention, unauthorized by the Holy Scriptures, apostolic usage, or the history of the better portions of the church. We do not consider ourselves disgraced for not believing in the 'succession,' when, in addition to nine-tenths of all Protestant christendom, and a large number of both the laity and clergy of our mother church, we have such prelates as Archbishop Usher, Bishops Stillingfleet, Hooker, White, and many others that might be named on our side. And as to our having originally in our Americanized Episcopal Church only Presbyterial ordination, derived through Mr. Wesley and other elders, presbyters or priests of the Church of England—as they may be indifferently called—we do not deny it, nor do we wish any better ordination, or deem any other at all essential. We have just such ordination as is authorized by the Holy Scriptures, the example of the apostolic churches, the writings of the fathers, and just such as is this day considered fully valid by nine-tenths of Protestant christendom."

"But," interposed Brother Lester, "you do not deny the validity of the ordinations in the Protestant Episcop-

pal Church, because they are conferred by Bishops, do you?"

"Certainly not," rejoined Brother Cardin, "but I do not believe their validity consists in their being conferred by a third order in the ministry exclusively called bishops, but in the fact that all the men who compose that third order are also presbyters, priests or elders; and it is their being of this order that gives validity to their ordinations. Do not understand me as objecting to a third order called bishops being alone authorized by the Church to preside over and take the lead in all ordinations. I think it best to have the ordaining power vested in a few well-qualified and appropriate officers. It is a solemn ministerial consecration, and after due deliberation as to the qualifications of the candidate, it should be performed in the most solemn and impressive manner. 'Lay hands suddenly on no man,' is the apostolic injunction. For this reason, while our church authorizes the consecration of a Bishop in a case of necessity by a Board of Elders, we have deposited the power of ordination exclusively in the hands of our Bishops on all ordinary occasions, except as he may be assisted in the ordination of elders by some of the elders present. I do not see how any unprejudiced and candid mind can read such books as Bishop Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, Powell on the Succession, Dr. Bangs' *Original Church of Christ*, and others of a kindred character that might be mentioned, and not fully adopt our theory on the subject of ordination as being entirely Scriptural, as well as the best in its practical results now in christendom."

"Now, brethren," said the Bishop, "we must close

for the night. Not that I object to your views, or the arguments by which you do and can sustain them, for I subscribe to the whole. But we have still a great work before us, and we shall need all the rest we can get; so let us now retire. Brother Billy, take away the waiter with what little is left of Brother Hartford's ample lunch. We meet here again to-morrow at 3, p. m. Good night, brethren. Peace be with you all in Christ Jesus," continued the Bishop, as they quietly retired, for fear of disturbing the family at this late hour.

## CHAPTER VI.

**A**bram Crusty and Robert Cole Contrasted—Joab Dodgey's Case Reconsidered—Discussion on Isaac Everton's Case—His Character Passes—Importance of Great Care in the Election of Elders—Accusation, Trial and Forcible Location of Jacob Sprouts.

Conference met on Friday morning at the usual hour, and, by request of the Bishop, was opened with religious services by Abram Crusty, a man venerable with years, and much respected on account of his long and faithful services in the itinerancy, but, from some cause not fully explicable, habitually gloomy, sour-spirited, and fault-finding. No one doubted his general reputation for personal piety, and fervent zeal in the cause of Christ, but he seldom seemed to look on the bright side of any subject. His peculiar religious temperament was exhibited this morning, while conducting the opening religious exercises of the Conference. He read with emphasis, for our morning lesson, the first ten verses of the thirty-fourth chapter of Ezekiel, as though he thought we were a body of unfaithful shepherds; then he repeated, and requested us to unite in singing, the hymn commencing,

“Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,”

which he said was very appropriate to our spiritual condition. In his prayer he made a general confession of our ministerial dolinquencies, and contrived, quite ingeniously, to compare what he considered the holier, happier and more prosperous days of the Church with what he conceived to be our present declining condition. He did not fail, however, to pray that we might all be made truly penitent for our various short-comings, obtain forgiveness, and set out anew from that

time, and live more in accordance with our ministerial vows and the example set us by our forefathers. Brother Crusty showed his peculiar characteristics in all our Conference deliberations. He saw something to object to in almost every motion—something to fear, something that might prove disastrous to the best interests of the Church. It is perhaps well enough to have one or two such men in every Conference. Their general opposition to others has a tendency to avert premature action—to elicit dicussion which throws additional light on the matters pending; and though they are more frequently than otherwise in the minority on the final vote, yet we must all admit that their course has a tendency to keep us on safe ground. But necessary as it may be to have a few such men in deliberative bodies to check hasty action, I would not like to be of the number. A man must be unhappy who is always looking on the dark and discouraging side of every thing that turns up. The venerable Robert Cole was quite a different man from Brother Crusty. His countenance was the best living picture of pure benevolence I have ever seen. He seemed to be a man of hope in everything. In all he said and did his ostensible object was to mend and make things better, instead of finding fault with them. He was often heard to say the Church had happy and prosperous times when he was a young man, had always been gaining some, is on higher and more advanced ground now than ever before; and he was certain the Millennium would come some time in the future history of the world. He admitted that there were a great many wicked people among us, and too many backsliders and nominal professors in the Church,

but there were not as many in proportion to the population as there were when he was young in the ministry. The multiplication of Annual Conferences, pastoral charges, churches, ministers and members, with the increasing resources of the Church in every department for the accomplishment of good, were facts that thrilled his soul with rapture. He said he had fought many a hard battle against the combined powers of earth and hell, and had sometimes felt a good deal worsted for the time being, but he had been so generally victorious that he had a thousand times more to be thankful for than to repine over. He had good times when he was young, when in manhood's prime, and now he was old, and no longer able to do effective service, he still had good times in his soul, and in communion with the Church. Blessed old man! What light, and love, and joy, beamed from his saintly face, shedding the bright sunshine of Christian peace and heavenly hope wherever he went. He never indulged the thought of giving any one up for lost. He could find ground for hope and persevering effort in the worst of cases. When any complaint was made against any poor, sinful, erring mortal—whether non-professor, Church member, or preacher—his first impulse was to make an extra effort to reclaim and save them. “Neglect them,” he would say, “treat them coldly and harshly, and you greatly increase their danger; but put them on your lists as subjects of special prayer, deal promptly and affectionately with them, and you may, and in many cases will, become instrumental in their salvation.” His nick-name among the preachers was Father Save-all, which was doubtless suggested by the

tenacity with which he clung to the worst of cases while there remained a shred of hope of ultimate success. He has ever been a general favorite among the preachers, and all loved to honor him. He never, intentionally, repulsed any one—never complained of feeling neglected or shoved aside to make room for younger men. He was sometimes heard to say that “he had done about as well as Robert Cole could do, and if the younger preachers could excel him, he would rejoice to see them do it; and the more the better, and the greater joy he would have in the evening of his long pilgrimage.”

But I have been digressing. At the close of the opening devotions the minutes of yesterday were read and approved. Reports of select and standing committees were called for, but none being fully ready, the Conference proceeded to consider a motion to reconsider the case of Joab Dodgey, who was dropped on yesterday, at the close of his second year, for general indolence and inefficiency in all his duties as a traveling preacher. The brother who made the motion to reconsider stated that he voted in the majority the day before, and saw no reason why he should change his vote, but Brother Dodgey had been in great distress about the matter, and, after conversing with a large number of the preachers, he thought a majority would favor his continuation on trial, and he made the motion to reconsider in order to test the question for the satisfaction of Brother Dodgey; but he had no speech to make in his favor. The motion to reconsider prevailed, which brought him again fairly before the Conference. After a short debate it was conceded, by common consent,

that he could not be elected either to Deacon's orders or received into full connection ; but several of the younger members thought, after the humiliating circumstance of his being dropped on yesterday, and the distress he manifested on account of it, he might be safely continued on probation another year. Abram Crusty sided with the brethren who favored his continuance on trial, and for the time being found himself voting in the majority, which was not often the case with him. He said "that while Brother Dodgey complained that his case was not fairly represented before the Conference, he was willing to admit that he had his imperfections in common with other men, and felt like he would try to do better if the Conference would give him another trial."

Randall Cardin said, "that it was true that Brother Dodgey appeared to be in great distress ever since his discontinuance was announced to him on yesterday, but he feared his 'sorrow' was more 'the sorrow of the world' than a true 'godly sorrow' for having inflicted so much injury on the Church and the character of the ministry by two years of shameful delinquency, and such a list of improprieties as no preacher ought ever to be guilty of. It might be an easy matter here to vote for his continuance, but after all the revelations made in reference to his case, it might be a very difficult matter in the Bishop's Council to find a circuit for him, or a Presiding Elder willing to take him in charge."

Several others sanctioned Brother Cardin's opinion, and added, that it was doing the Bishop and his Council great injustice to place such impracticable cases in their hands to be disposed of. The vote being taken, a majority of two secured his continuance for the present,

the Presiding Elders and the staid members of the Conference voting in the minority.

"I fear you are not done with this case yet," said the Bishop, with a troubled countenance.

"Mr. President," said Father Cole, "I trust you will now permit the case of Isaac Everton to come up, which was laid over yesterday on my motion."

As soon as his cheerful voice was heard in connection with the name of Isaac Everton, the members straightened up in their seats and looked with lively interest toward the venerable man.

"We will take up the case of Brother Everton at your request, Brother Cole," said the Bishop; "what have you to say in reference to it?"

Brother Cole proceeded: "I requested his case to be laid over yesterday, sir, in order that I might have time for a private interview with him before it was finally disposed of. I had a short, but I trust profitable, interview with him soon after the adjournment of Conference, and another later in the afternoon, in company with Brother Hartford, at our room, and a glorious one it was. I need not detain the Conference to hear all the thrilling and heart-cheering incidents of that ever to be remembered interview. Let it suffice for me to say that Brother Everton is all right now. He has been thoroughly 'renewed in the spirit of his mind, and I think we may safely calculate that from this time onward he will be all that we may reasonably desire him to be. He does not wish to be received into full connection; says he is not worthy of such advancement at present, but requests to be continued on trial another year, that he may complete his probationary studies and come into

the Conference properly qualified, as every man ought to be before he is received. He acknowledges that a desire to excel as a sermonizer and orator in the pulpit misled him as to the primary importance of mastering the course of study, and that the unguarded adulations of some imprudent members of his former charges had begotten in his mind too much self-complacency, so that he was led, almost imperceptibly, 'to think more highly of himself than he ought' to have done. I believe he has most sincerely bewept the consequences of his misguided views and feelings, and has learned a lesson that will be beneficial to him in all after life. He says he now hopes to be always as humble and teachable as a child, and as 'a son in the Gospel, to obey reverently with a glad mind and will the godly admonitions' of his elder brethren."

Brother Hartford sanctioned all that Brother Cole had said, but deemed it unnecessary in so plain a case to add anything more. But, before the vote could be taken, Abram Crusty arose, and, addressing the President, said "he did not like the looks of that young man Everton—that he walked too straight and held his head too high—that he dressed rather too fine, and seemed too careful to have every article of his apparel fashionably adjusted; in a word, he looked more like a clerk in a fancy clothing store, or a quasi lawyer, than a Methodist preacher."

Gray Lester playfully replied "that Brother Crusty had better be careful how he found fault with Brother Everton's personal appearance, lest his fault finding should hit a little further over than he intended it to hit—that the Allwise Creator had made Brother Ever-

ton a much straighter and a much better looking man every way than most of us are, and that indifferent clothes would look better on him than the best would look on such men as Brother Crusty and himself; for himself he did not want to find fault with anything that God had made."

The vote was now taken on the passage of his character and his continuance on trial, and all but two or three voted affirmatively.

"We now take up the fifth question," said the Bishop. "Who have been elected and ordained elders this year? There are higher *officers* in the ministry than that of elders, brethren, but no higher *order*. The order of elders or presbyters is the highest *order* in the Christian ministry recognized in the Holy Scriptures. Presiding Elders and Bishops among us are higher in *office* than the body of Elders, but not higher as to the grade of *order* in the ministry. When by your suffrages you place a man in the hands of your constituted agents to be ordained Elder, and that ordination takes place, he is then in the highest *order* of an evangelical ministry. His prescribed course of study ceases, so far as annual examinations are concerned, and he has full authority to administer the sacraments and perform all the functions of the ministry independent of the presence and assistance of any other minister or superior officer in the Church. How important, then, that you should permit no man to pass into this holy and elevated order until you are fully satisfied that he is every way worthy and well qualified to exercise its holy functions. The apostolic admonition, 'Lay hands suddenly on no man,'

should have its due weight with you here. With these precautionary remarks we will proceed."

The class was then called, one by one, and the Committee of Examination, through their Chairman, reported them all from fair to fully fair in their studies, and their Presiding Elders spoke favorably of the prudence, zeal and usefulness of each one, until the name of Jacob Sprouts was called. The committee had to say in his case what had been said a year before, that he was unusually deficient in every part of the course of study, and they thought him very blameworthy for it, as he had a fair rudimental education, and certainly had a mind capable of improvement if he would apply himself to study. They could not recommend him for Elder's orders, though he was now a year behind the usual time.

"Let us hear from his Presiding Elder," said the Bishop. Brother Innis arose, with downcast eyes and feelings of evident mortification, and said: "Mr. President, I am sorry to say that this is a bad case. This Brother, Jacob Sprouts, has caused me more trouble and heartfelt sorrow than any sprout I ever had anything to do with."

"Cut it down, then. Why cumbereth it the ground?" suddenly interjected Gray Lester, while a suppressed laugh pervaded the Conference.

The Bishop let fall his gavel and said, "Order, brethren; let Brother Innis proceed to represent the case of Brother Sprouts."

Jackson Innis resumed: "I have feared, for two or three Conferences past, that there was something radically wrong in Jacob Sprouts. I noticed the com-

mittees of examination were very sparing in their commendations of his proficiency in his studies, and while his former Presiding Elders would modestly say that there was nothing against his *moral* character, it was evident they had to exercise a good deal of charity and forbearance to let him pass uncensured. And then in the Bishop's Council I noticed that no Presiding Elder who had him one year would consent, on any terms, to take him another year. They would say, rather evasively, that they would like to accommodate Brother Sprouts, and see him do well, but really they had no suitable place for him."

"Mr. President," interposed Randall Cardin, "I do not think Brother Innis ought to be telling tales out of school in that way. I thought the doings of the Council were to be kept secret."

"Yes; kept secret, Brother Cardin," said the Bishop, "until it becomes necessary and proper to reveal them, and then they ought to be made known. I reckon Brother Innis is telling the truth, and we should not be afraid to hear it. I request the brethren not to interrupt him any more. If he wander from the point, I will call him to order. Proceed, Brother Innis."

"I guess, Mr. President," continued Brother Innis, "Brother Cardin began to feel afraid that I was going to tell how ingeniously he got Jacob Sprouts transferred from his District to mine at our last Conference, but I will not tell that on him now. I will simply endeavor to give the Conference a fair representation of Brother Sprouts during the past year."

"I hope, Mr. President," said Jacob Sprouts, rising suddenly to his feet, "that I will be permitted, at the

proper time, to make my defense; and that I will be allowed the usual privilege of selecting an experienced brother to assist me."

"Certainly, Brother Sprouts," replied the Bishop, "you shall have every facility for self-defense; and perhaps you had better select your counsel now, that he may at once concentrate his mind upon your case, and be thereby the better prepared to assist you in your self-vindication. Whom do you select as your counselor?"

Brother Sprouts replied: "I request Brother Reedum to act for me in that capacity."

Brother Reedum consented to do so, and immediately, with pencil and paper in hand, took a seat beside the accused, and, after a moment's private conversation, arose and said:

"Mr. President, my only object shall be to see that the law of the Church, in such cases made and provided, is carried out properly, and that my client shall have all the advantages under the law that he is entitled to. As I see there are grave complaints to be made against Brother Sprouts, I wish to ask Brother Innis a few preliminary questions before these complaints are made public to the Conference and other persons present."

"Proceed with your interrogatories, Brother Reedum," said the Bishop.

"I wish then, in the first place," said Brother Reedum, "to ask Brother Innis under what head of complaints he places his allegations against Brother Sprouts?"

"Under the head," replied Brother Innis, "of a member of an Annual Conference who conducts himself in a

manner which renders him unacceptable to the people as a traveling preacher."

Brother Reedum further inquired: "Have you taken the preliminary steps of private reprobation and admonition required by the Discipline?"

Brother Innis replied: "I have. Having heard several complaints against Brother Sprouts, I invited him to walk with me to the woods, at the conclusion of our second Quarterly Conference, and told him plainly all that I had heard against him in the way of regular complaints. He demurred to most of the items, and said they were too highly colored as told to me, that he may have been somewhat imprudent in a few instances, that he did not profess to have been as faithful in the discharge of his ministerial duties as he might have been, but he thought his general course was such as might be approved. As the complaints of the people had multiplied by the third Quarterly meeting, and came from the most respectable sources, I took two local Deacons and one local Elder with me, and we unitedly labored several hours with Brother Sprouts in the way of admonition and exhortation. We told him plainly that he could not be borne with much longer, and that without the most unmistakable evidences of amendment, he would probably be located at our next Conference without having to ask for it. He gave us but little satisfaction as to his purposes of amendment, but seemed rather to justify his course by saying the people were too fastidious and hard to please. At our fourth Quarterly meeting, when I inquired particularly into the state of the work, the official members agreed in saying that the circuit had manifestly deteriorated

during the year; that the congregation had dwindled down to a mere handful when it was known that Brother Sprouts was to preach; that the stewards found it almost impossible to collect money to pay the salaries of the preachers; and had it not been for the faithfulness of their local preachers in filling their appointments and keeping up their class-meetings, they might set it down as a lost year, and worse than lost. After the adjournment of the Quarterly Conference, I told Brother Sprouts that, as a conscientious administrative officer, I would be compelled to exhibit complaints against him at this Conference, which I am now ready to do."

"Let me ask Brother Innis another question before he publishes his complaints to the Conference," said Brother Reedum. "Did you furnish Brother Sprouts with a written bill of your complaints against him, with the specifications all distinctly set forth, a sufficient length of time past to allow him every necessary opportunity to collect his rebutting testimony and prepare for his defense?"

Brother Innis answered, "I did, at least six weeks ago; so that Brother Sprouts is not taken by surprise at all."

"Brother Innis is a prudent administrative officer, I see, Mr. President," said Brother Reedum, "having taken all the preliminary steps in due form and order, so that there is no ground for a demurrer to arrest the progress of the trial. We are now ready to hear the allegations."

"Let Brother Innis then place them in the hands of the Secretary, who will read them to the Conference," said the Bishop.

The Secretary immediately read the following complaint, with the annexed specifications, viz:

“The undersigned, in behalf of the official and lay members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Smith’s Valley Circuit, complains against Jacob Sprouts, preacher in charge, for having conducted himself in a manner which renders him unacceptable to the people as a traveling preacher.

“Specification 1st.—General indolence in studying to show himself approved, and in attending to his pulpit and pastoral duties as preacher in charge.

“Specification 2d.—General levity and imprudence in his conversation—in the way of common-place jesting, telling foolish and sometimes smutty anecdotes, to the gratification of the wicked and grief of his brethren.

“Specification 3d.—Lying in bed so late in the morning as greatly to annoy and incommod the families where he lodges; tumbling the beds during the day; discharging his saliva when chewing tobacco promiscuously over the floor, walls and furniture of the house, and requiring more waiting upon than a gentleman in health ought to require.

“JACKSON INNIS, P. E.

“October 15th, 18—”

Brother Innis then introduced several official members from Smith’s Valley Circuit, who were present as witnesses, all of whom testified to the truth of the facts set forth in the several specifications. He then handed to the Secretary the written testimony of several absent witnesses to the same effect. Before the certificates were read Brother Reedum requested the Secretary to see whether they were all duly dated and properly

signed. These points being settled satisfactorily, the certificates were read, lettered and filed. Just there Brother Reedum arose, as though he saw the glimmering of a chance to rule out this written testimony as *ex parte*, and asked Brother Innis if he had given Brother Sprouts due and timely notice of the time and place of taking this written testimony, with the names of the deponents, that he might avail himself of his right to cross-examine the witnesses?

Brother Innis replied that he had.

"The testimony, then, Mr. President, on the part of the plaintiff, is all in legal form," said Brother Reedum.

"Innis would have made a good lawyer," said Gray Lester to Father Cole, in an undertone.

Father Cole replied, "Perhaps so, if that had been his providential calling; but if not he might have made a signal failure in attempting it. As it is God designated him for the work of the ministry, and, by 'studying to show himself approved,' he has become, not only an 'able minister of the New Testament, but also a first-class administrative officer. It is rarely, if ever, the case you find him at fault in explaining or executing the laws of the church. And so might it generally be with our ministers if they would apply themselves as diligently as Jackson Innis has done."

"Have you any rebutting testimony to offer in your defence, Brother Sprouts?" inquired the Bishop.

"Well, sir," replied Jacob Sprouts, "I am sorry that it has not been in my power to get any of the witnesses here that I had hoped would be here to speak a good word in my favor. I spoke to several of the brethren about coming to my relief after Brother Innis handed

me a copy of the complaint and specifications, but, like the men in the parable, 'they all, with one consent, began to make excuse.' Several of them said that, though they wished me well, they did not like to be mixed up with church trials, and I would have to excuse them; while others said that they did not think that anything they could say would amount to much in my favor. I have two or three certificates here, not such as I would like to have, but, as they all certify to the correctness of my moral character, I wish them read to the Conference as testimony in my favor."

"Mr. President," said Brother Innis, "I shall object to their being read as testimony, for I had no notification from Brother Sprouts of his intention to take the testimony of any one, and as *ex parte* testimony is inadmissible, of course they will be ruled out. I have no objection to their being read, and taken for what they are worth as the mere opinions of the writers, but they can not be admitted as legal testimony."

"I suppose, then," said Brother Sprouts, "that Brother Innis does not intend to permit me to introduce the only testimony I have, because it is wholly *ex parte* as he calls it—that is, I suppose, wholly on my part."

"I think it likely, Brother Sprouts," said the Bishop, "that you are mistaken as to the meaning of term *ex parte*. It is a forensic or law term, and means, in connection with the taking of testimony, that one party to the suit has not been notified to be present in order to cross-examine the witnesses. Brother Innis is right in objecting to your certificates as *ex parte*."

"Well, sir," said Brother Sprouts, "I do not profess to understand the technicalities of the law; I only aim to

be a plain Methodist preacher. I have another document here I would like to have read, but I suppose it will be summarily ruled out on the same ground."

"I have no objection," said Brother Innis, "to having it read, especially as I suppose it favorable to Brother Sprouts; but I shall object to it as legal testimony upon the ground of its being wholly *ex parte*."

"I shall object to its being read at all, Mr. President," said Brother Crusty, "as it will be wasting the time of the Conference to no good purpose. I am anxious to get through with this disagreeable case."

"But you know, Brother Crusty," replied the Bishop, "the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side; and if the Conference please, I am inclined to encourage the reading of the document."

"Read! Read!" came from a dozen voices, and the paper was placed in the hands of the Secretary to be read. It was evidently written by some one wholly unacquainted with the technicalities and disciplinary rules of our Church. It set forth the facts that the "subscribers esteemed Mr. Sprouts a gentleman of fine social qualities, of good moral character, a true proclaimer of Christianity, and, so far as they were concerned, they would like to have him continued as a member of their community." The paper had more than fifty names subscribed to it, mostly of persons living in and near Gadville, the principal village in the circuit, on the streets of which it was said Brother Sprouts spent a large portion of his time in desultory and jovial conversation. The paper was subscribed by Jews and Gentiles; foreign born and natives; gamblers and loafers; men, women and children—in two instances whole fam-

lies, down to little boys and girls, all in the same hand-writing; several members of other Churches—especially of the Christian, better known as the Campbellite Church; and two Methodists—one of whom had lately been drunk, and the other, a widow, had just had a dancing party at her house. The Conference saw at a glance that it had been gotten up by the opposers of our Church and others who felt no interest in our prosperity, and paid no further attention to it. Brother Sprouts explained the paternity of the nondescript, by saying that some of his friends had heard that an attempt would be made to crush him at Conference, and had drawn up this manifesto to afford him some relief.

The testimony being closed, the Bishop said "that Brother Innis, as the administrative officer in preparing this case for the action of the Conference, will act as prosecutor in summing up the testimony against the accused; and then the defendant, in person and by his counsel, shall have ample opportunity to reply in his defense; after which the accused will retire, and the Conference will deliberate on and decide the case."

Brother Innis arose and said: "I will not detain the Conference with a long speech, as they have heard the testimony, and will be governed in their decision by that. A few things, as the legal representative of Brother Sprouts, I feel it my duty to say. As to the first specification, 'that he has been too indolent in his studies, and in attending to his pulpit and pastoral duties,' I have, and the Conference now has, the most indubitable evidence of its truth. The Bible, and other theological books prescribed in the course of study, he would not read; the secular papers he did read some, especially

the column of wit and pleasantry—articles headed murder, seduction, elopement, etc., and accounts of mobs, railroad accidents and steamboat explosions; and then he would spend his time in retailing out what he had seen in the papers. As to his pulpit duties, he contrived to miss getting to many of his appointments; and often when he did get there he would have something, as he would say, 'like neuralgia, or strong symptoms of bronchitis, or felt mighty bad in some way,' so that he would excuse himself from preaching a regular sermon, and put the people off with what he called a 'little religious talk.' And as to pastoral duties, I doubt whether he understands the phrase. The members on Smith's Valley Circuit the past year have been literally as sheep without a shepherd. As to the second specification, about his 'lightness, jesting and foolish, and often smutty talking,' our best members complain of having been so bored with it, and so grieved to have such an example set before their children, that they have often wished, while they were willing to feed him and his horse, that they could hide him out somewhere, so that their families might not see him at all. And as to the third specification, about his 'lying abed so late, tumbling the beds during the day, and spitting his tobacco juice over the floors and walls of the houses where he was in the habit of staying,' you have the testimony before you that all these unclerical things are true. Our members complain, wherever he usually stayed at night, that he laid abed so late in the morning that he deranged all their usual plans for prayers and breakfast. Several families adopted a commendable plan of not waiting for him at all, but going on with

their usual family devotions as though he were not there. The rattling of the table furniture roused him up one morning at Brother O'Neal's, and when he came out of his room he found the family quietly eating their breakfast. 'I am astonished, Brother O'Neal,' he exclaimed, 'to know that you, a class-leader, should neglect your family prayers in this way!' 'I have not neglected my family prayers, Brother Sprouts,' quietly replied the good man. 'You havn't! How is this, then, that you are eating your breakfast without having prayer this morning?' inquired Brother Sprouts. 'We have read a chapter, sung and prayed here this morning, my brother,' replied Brother O'Neal, 'and I am surprised my old lady did not wake you up with a good little shout she gave while we were singing,

'Jesus sought me when a stranger,' etc.,

You must have been in a deep sleep.' 'Well, you must excuse me, Brother O'Neal,' said Sprouts, with a supplicating tone, 'that long nap I took yesterday after dinner, or something else, kept me from sleeping the fore part of the night, so that I just got fairly at it toward the morning.' But this late sleeping in the morning, Mr. President, is only the beginning of his annoying habits. The good sisters where he spends the day have not more than got their beds made up in the morning before he drops down on one, often with his boots on, and a quid of tobacco in his mouth, from which he discharges his saliva on the floor, or on the wall back of the bed, whichever way his face happens to be at the time. But I have said enough. These brief outlines might be filled up indefinitely with his rustic manners and unclerical conduct. It is a standing

reproach to the whole Conference to retain any such man among us."

Brother Sprouts then arose and said, "that I only wished to make a few remarks in my own behalf. I do not profess to be perfect in anything, and I often find that though 'the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak.' I have spent five long years in the Conference, and I hope the brethren will set that down as so much in my favor at least. Some of my circuits have been large, and I have had to expose myself to the 'summer's heat and winter's cold' in traveling them. Like Paul, I have been in perils oft. Once the rain turned to ice on my overcoat; at another time, while I was threading my way along an obscure path, my horse became entangled in some vines and fell down, and came very near hurting me badly; and at another time I got lost and came very near having to stay out in the mountains all night, houseless and supperless. I fear the brethren are prejudiced against me; and you know, Mr. President, it is very hard for a man to defend himself in a Conference where he has so many against him and so few friends. It is hard for me to think of parting from the brethren with whom I have spent five of the best years of my life."

By this time the speaker had pumped up a flood of tears, which he let fall in great profusion, and then sat down saying, "I am too much overcome to add anything more."

As Brother Reedum declined speaking in his defense, he was requested to retire. As soon as he was out several voices called for the vote, without further debate, and the specifications being put separately, were almost

unanimously sustained ; and then it was as unanimously declared that the specifications fully sustained the complaint. Whereupon a motion was made to locate Jacob Sprouts, on the ground of general unacceptability as a traveling preacher.

Pending this motion, Brother Abram Crusty arose and said : " Mr. President, this motion, if I understand it, in case it prevails, will not take away his standing as a Deacon in our Church, but simply turn him out of the Annual Conference and send him off to some Quarterly Conference as a local Deacon. Now, sir, I do not see the justice of imposing a man on a Quarterly Conference that we will not consent to retain in our Annual Conference. I think if he will not do here, he will not do anywhere ; and we ought either to expel him or depose him entirely from the ministry."

" I think, Mr. President," said Randall Cardin, " Brother Crusty has taken an extreme and rather uncharitable view of this case. Some men may do, at least, passably well as local preachers whose temperament and habits are not suitable for the itinerancy. And as to imposing him on a Quarterly Conference—a Quarterly Conference, by granting him license to preach and recommending him to our Annual Conference, first imposed him on us ; and when, after a fair trial, we find he will not answer our purpose, they ought to be willing to take their protégé back again. If the Quarterly Conferences are made to take their own physic, it may make them a little more careful who they license and recommend to the Annual Conference."

The vote was now taken, and the motion to locate Jacob Sprouts prevailed. The class of the fourth year

being now disposed of, the Bishop requested that the Presiding Elders would be ready on the next morning to bring forward and represent all the candidates from the local department for Deacons' and Elders' orders, as he wished to be ready on the Sabbath for the ordination of all who might be elected. After the usual announcements were made, Conference adjourned.

## CHAPTER VII.

Jacob Sprouts Threatens to Leave the Church—Some Discussion Among the Presiding Elders About it—Accommodating Aged Ministers, and those whose Families are Settled—Discussion on Local Itinerancy—Foreshadowing of 'Knotty Cases'—Eighteen Cases Disposed of—Discussion About the Way to Dispose of Old and Feeble Ministers—How the Thing was Done.

The Bishop's Council met at 3 o'clock, P. M., pursuant to adjournment. The members were early in their attendance, and before the Bishop called us to order, Brother Innis informed us of the loss our Church was about to sustain in the withdrawal of Rev. Jacob Sprouts. "He came to my room half an hour past," said Brother Innis, "and told me that he intended to dissolve his connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church forever, and join the Protestant Methodist Church; that our Church government was oppressive and even tyrannical; that the Bishops and a few ambitious men had usurped the entire control of everything in the Annual Conferences; that they put up one, and put down another, just as it best suited their own selfish views and ends; and he intended to go where he would have more freedom and be more respected. I told him," continued Brother Innis, "that it was passing strange that in a Church containing a million and a half of members, a large proportion of whom were as well read and as intelligent as any people in the country, so few had ever found out that our church government was oppressive and tyrannical; that it must be a very illusive sort of oppression and tyranny, as nearly all our ministers of every grade, as well as our vast membership, were perfectly contented and happy under its control. I further remarked to him that one thing

I had often noticed—that no one is so apt to complain of the rigor of the laws as he who violates them and renders himself obnoxious to their penal sanctions; and that, as a general rule, no man is more opposed to hanging than he who deserves to be hung. He then said to me, ‘it was a loss of time and breath to talk to him about the matter; he knew what he knew, and his mind was unalterably made up to join the Protestant Methodist Church.’ O well! said I, if you do I reckon it will not subject the country to earthquakes, pestilence or war; that the sun will continue to rise and set as it did before; that we shall still have ‘day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest,’ and, moreover, that the Methodist Episcopal Church would still go on and prosper, as it had done before he was born, and, as I believed, it would do long after his death; and that if a few more of his sort would cease to vex us and consume our precious time by leaving us, as he had promised to do, it might be much more to our advantage than theirs.”

Randall Cardin remarked, that “the Protestant Methodist Church has done a good deal in the way of relieving our Church of discontented and unruly ministers and members, and by this means has contributed to the purification of our communion.”

“Come, brethren,” interposed the Bishop, “perhaps it will be best not to talk so about a collateral branch of the great Methodistic family. I would regret to know that our younger sister, the Protestant Methodist Church, would permit herself to become a reservoir to catch all the scum and driftwood that floats out of our Church, or any other Church. There are some very

unpleasant reflections, I know, connected with the organization and subsequent history of the Protestant Methodist Church; but there is a fair proportion of valuable members and ministers in her communion, and I can but hope that they will yet see that there is no necessity for their separate organization in proximity with our Church, and that union is strength, and that in order to be more efficient in extending and building up the Redeemer's Kingdom, they will, before the lapse of many years, reciprocate our wishes to see them united with the parent stock of Methodism in America by coming into our communion."

Brother Hartford, with a sad countenance, and in a subdued tone of voice, remarked: "My mind, brethren, is still on the case of Jacob Sprouts. For five years the members and ministers of our Church have borne with his peccadillos, and have labored to make something worthy of a Christian minister out of him; and now the result of our forbearance and labor is not only a total failure in accomplishing the desired object, but because we have been compelled by the laws of Christianity to deal with him according to his demerits, instead of the much needed repentance and reformation on his part, he has become our enemy and traducer!"

"Such has too often been the case before, Brother Hartford," replied the Bishop. "But let us not be weary in well-doing. In this, as in all similar cases, our reward will be according to our well-intended labor, and not according to our success. But the time has come to begin our afternoon work; let us betake ourselves to it. Brother Lester will please lead us in prayer."

The prayer was short, but appropriate and fervent.

The Bishop then said, "that our main business at this sitting would be to provide, in-time, for the stationing of two classes of our ministers: first, such as could not move their families, and must be placed within a reasonable distance of home; and secondly, the few effective old men, who were unwilling to be declared superannuated, and yet could not be relied on to do heavy work." He requested each Presiding Elder to give him a list of all such cases in his District, which was done by calling the Districts in order, and putting down the names as reported.

"Mr. President," said Brother Reedum, "I have encouraged myself to hope that the time would come when this local itinerancy would be broken up, and every traveling preacher would be afloat, ready to go anywhere in this or any other Conference where, in your wisdom, you might think his services most needed; but I now despair of ever seeing that desirable end attained while we allow our ministers to settle their families permanently, and then accommodate them with appointments near home from year to year. If I had my way, I would grant them no such accommodations; and I would compel them to be itinerants in the proper sense of the term, or drive them from the itinerancy altogether."

"I am very glad, Mr. President," said Brother Ransom, "that Brother Reedum can not have his way in this matter; for if he had, he would drive a large number of our most holy, experienced, laborious and useful men from the regular pastoral work; and there never has been a time in the history of our Church when such

a course would not have done it. These local itinerants, as they are contemptuously called, have done as much to extend and build up our branch of the general Church as any other class of men. Their wives, children and household servants are not licensed to preach and recommended to the itinerary by our Quarterly Conferences, nor are they ever received into our Annual Conference in any formal way, so as to place them at our disposal; and I do not see that we have any more right to control them without their consent than we have to control the wives, children and servants of our other official members, such as local preachers, class-leaders and stewards. If the men will do the work assigned them in all these official relations, I think we may prudently and safely let them have the management of their own families, as to where and how they shall live."

"Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off," interjected Randall Cardin. "Brother Reedum has not yet finished his itinerant career, nor is he done with the rearing and education of his children; and the time may yet come when he will either have to be what he calls a local itinerant or no itinerant at all. Such has been the demand for ministers of his qualifications that he has generally been kept in the more intelligent and wealthy portions of our Conference, where the charges are small in territory, parsonages already furnished for his occupancy, and the salaries good, to which we may add the perquisites of his office in the way of marriage fees, presents to himself and family etc., and in such circumstances he finds it quite eas

to be what he calls a full itinerant; but let him have to spend a few years with his family in the sand hills or mountain valleys of our Conference, where there are yet no parsonages, and where the circuits and districts are very large and the salaries very small, and where a minister often gets only one or two dollars for riding fifteen or twenty miles to marry a couple, and I dare to venture the opinion that he will change his views about a local itinerancy."

"And if a career in the sand hills and mountain valleys would not change the opinion of Brother Reedum on this subject," interposed Brother Lester, "let him come for a few years into the Pineville District, where he would soon be glad to own a quarter section of land, with a comfortable family residence on it, where his wife, and children, and servants—if he had any—could raise corn and cows, potatoes and pigs, to support themselves with while he might be traveling at large over several counties, without receiving enough to keep himself in clothes, horses and traveling equipage, to say nothing about the support of his family and education of his children."

"Mr. President," retorted Brother Reedum, rather hastily, "I have never made my own appointments, and if I have been kept in eligible stations, while others have been sent to the Pinewoods and mountain gorges, it has not been my fault. I have always thought myself willing to go anywhere the wisdom of the appointing power might deem it best to send me."

"Well, Bishop," said Gray Lester, facetiously, "suppose we give Zedekiah Reedum a chance to 'show his

faith by his works.' My family is settled on an eighty acre tract of land out in the Pineville District, but we are a good deal like Gipseys in one respect—that is, we can carry the most we have got at one load—and I propose to swap places with Brother Reedum. Send him to the Pineville District, and let me come and live awhile among the nice people in the Cherryville District in order to see if I can not rub a little polish on myself and family by the process of assimilation. And I would have such an easy task in such a compact little work, with its fine parsonage and ample salary; in addition to which, I, too, could get from five to fifty dollars for officiating at the hymeneal altar of our wealthy young people hereabout. What do you say to the arrangement, Bishop?"

"I say," gravely remarked the Bishop, "that you must not allow yourselves to feel wounded at each other's pleasantry. Men's views of the same facts often differ as much as their personal appearance, so that it is very common for half a dozen men to have as many shades of difference about the same thing. I am glad, however, that you have got this subject up, if you will only look at and discuss it as practical men ought. I see Brother Hartford has been waiting an opportunity to give us the results of his long observation and experience on this subject. Let us listen to him."

How piously ingenious, thought I, is our beloved Bishop, to introduce just at this point the sweet-spirited, conservative and generally taciturn Josephus Hartford, in order to arrest what might have become a disagreeable discussion.

Brother Hartford proceeded to give us his views as fo

lows: "Mr. President, the best way to look at any fact is to look at it with a practical eye, just as it is, and must continue to be. Now, our present plan, and I may add, our uniform plan from the beginning, of accommodating some ministers with local families, has worked well; and as it is still, so I believe it will always be a necessary part of our itinerant system. As Brother Ransom, in substance, just now remarked, when we receive men into the itinerancy, we do not receive their wives, children and servants in any way that deprives them of the privilege, or releases them from the responsibility, as husbands, fathers or masters, of governing and providing for them as either affection or a sense of duty may prompt them to do. If the ministers themselves will answer our purposes as itinerant pastors, we claim no right to intermeddle ourselves with their domestic affairs. I can see many reasons why some ministers can not, and others ought not to, itinerate their families. It is very desirable, on many accounts, to keep men from settling down permanently who have small families, with but little prospect of increasing them as long as they can feel justifiable in remaining unsettled; but it is exceedingly difficult where ministers have several children large enough to work and go to school, to raise them to habits of industry and economy, and to educate them systematically, where they have to be moved every year or two. And this plan of removing children from place to place, and often into very uncomfortable quarters, has a tendency to depress their spirits, destroy their self-reliance, and beget in them a feeling of dependence on others; whereas, if they had a home of their own, where they could remain to enjoy all they

could acquire and all the little improvements they might make, it would have the contrary effect on them. Moreover, as a general rule, children are more easily and safely governed in a home of their own than they are in a transition state. Again, there are many excellent wives of preachers whose health, constitutional temperament, habits of life, local ties and domestic sensibilities will not permit them, with any sort of comfort, or even safety, to undergo the anxiety, fatigue and exposure of an annual or biennial break up, move and re-settlement; and yet they are willing, without a murmur, to give their husbands wholly to the pastoral work, while they will remain contentedly at home supervising all the temporal and spiritual interests of the family in his absence. The value of such wives to our itinerant ministers can not be over-estimated. In addition to these considerations, it would soon ruin some families pecuniarily to set them afloat. In the best portions of our Conference our moveable brethren often find it difficult to balance accounts at the end of the year, and were they to attempt it in some portions of our work, a few years would exhaust all their means, and perhaps their credit, too, and leave them oppressed with heavy pecuniary embarrassments. And as to the oft-repeated objection, that a minister will outlive his usefulness by remaining too long in one section of the Conference, a great deal more depends on the man himself than on the length of time he may labor as a minister in any given locality. If he, by a faithful continuance in well-doing, establishes a good and consistent character as a gentleman, neighbor, Christian and minister of the Gospel, his usefulness may be more abundant there to the

close of life than it would be among strangers, who could not appreciate his well-earned reputation. By being with the people under every variety of circumstance, officiating at their hymenial altars, baptizing their children, giving them Christian counsel and consolation, visiting their sick and burying their dead, he becomes intertwined with all their sympathies, and has many avenues of access to their hearts which he can not have to the hearts of strangers. How is it that a plain, unsophisticated class-leader can meet the same class once a week for twenty years and not lose his usefulness; whereas, according to the objection, a talented minister must be changed frequently from place to place lest he should outlive his usefulness? As I said before, there is more in the man after all than in the length of time he may continue in any given locality. Some ministers are so indolent in their studies, or so much taken up with other things, that they add but little to their scanty stock of theology, and hence they are under the necessity of preaching the same sermons and telling the same anecdotes so often to the same people that they do wear out and have to go elsewhere to get interested congregations; while others have so many weak points or sharp corners in their characters that they soon lose the respect, if not the confidence, of the masses, and it may be very well to send them away to take a new start in a new field of labor. I fear before we get through in stationing the preachers in this Conference you will find that we have two or three such cases on hand now of men who have been moved well nigh all over our territory, until we scarcely know

where next to send them, such is their facility for wearing themselves out wherever they go."

"Send them where you did Jacob Sprouts to-day," interrupted Jackson Innis. "That is just where all such cases ought to go."

"Mr. President," said Brother Lester, "Brother Hartford is too modest and good-natured to assign another reason why it is best for a few of our ministers not to move their families into their pastoral charges, and I will venture to do it. It is the misfortune of a few good preachers to have such ignorant, imprudent, ill-tempered, indolent and improvident wives, that it is best to keep them hid as much as possible from the charges served by their good husbands."

"Now, Brother Lester, do stop," interposed Brother Hartford. "We have very few such cases, and such unfortunate brethren deserve our warmest sympathies."

"Yes," said Brother Cardin, "I reckon this is one reason why a few of our preachers can stay away from home so well contented, when they might be with their families. There is something in the peculiar trials they meet with there that greatly abridges the pleasures of home."

"Well, brethren," said the Bishop, "let us come to anchor. We have about twenty men here whose families can not be moved, and we must put them all within reasonable distance of their homes. The Gospel does not ordinarily require the separation of husbands and wives, parents and children, and we are not authorized to do it in any way that would contravene the faithful discharge of their relative duties to each other."

"Mr. President," said Brother Reedum, "after all

that has been said, I think it would be best to compel some of these men either to remove their families to other portions of the Conference or to locate. Having so many of this sort, who are regularly accommodated from year to year, has too great a tendency to encourage our young married men to settle their families, and to give those who are already settled an advantage over their brethren in the way of accumulating property. Here am I, at the end of twenty-five years in the itinerancy, with scarcely anything beyond what is necessary for the present wants of my family, and but little to leave for the support of my wife and children in case of my death. Living a good deal about towns, and in wealthy portions of the country, though I have generally received what is called large salaries, it has taken about all to keep my family on a par with the society they had to keep; while there is Asa Grubbs, the same age in the ministry with myself, who, at the end of twelve years in the itinerancy, was as poor as I was; but he settled his family away out in the country on a good piece of land, and now he has a snug farm, well stocked with all sorts of domestic animals, and worked by ten effective hands, and his annual income from the proceeds of his farm ranges from fifteen to twenty-five hundred dollars yearly, in addition to his salary as a minister; so that his family has all the comforts of life in common with their neighbors, and he is educating his sons at our college and his daughters at our Conference seminary, and, in case of his death, will leave his family in very independent circumstances."

"Mr. President," said William Ransom, "perhaps I can throw a little light on the thrift of Brother Grubbs.

In addition to what he is as an industrious and successful economist, sister Grubbs is an exception in the way of taking care of and improving everything about her home. She possesses great energy of character, and is as proverbial for her industry and economy as she is for the depth and uniformity of her piety. The care she has taken of a few prolific servants, inherited from her father's estate, has mostly supplied the ten effective hands now laboring on their farm. Their children also have willing hearts and ready hands to work. You never find their sons loafing about the streets with a cigar in their mouths and a fancy walking cane in their hands, nor their daughters sitting demurely with their hands in their lap while their mother is doing the house work. They all work, all economize, all take holiday when the work is done, and are all happy, and love home above every place."

"I have but one question to ask here about Brother Grubbs, as his name has been incidentally called up," said the Bishop. "Has he done his work well from year to year as a traveling preacher?"

"Never heard a breath of complaint against him in my life on that score," quickly answered Brother Reedum.

"Well, that is all we have anything to do with," rejoined the Bishop. "His farm, stock, effective hands, yearly proceeds, and the education of his children, belong to him, and not to us, and we have no right to meddle ourselves with his home affairs. If he does his work well as an itinerant pastor, we ought to rejoice that God prospers him so much in his secular affairs,

especially as I learn he is quite liberal to his needy brethren."

"I think, Mr. President," said Brother Hartford, "that Brother Reedum, in his zeal for what he calls a consistent itinerancy, has lost sight of one very important fact, which is, that the men who have heretofore been most abundant in labors and privations, and who have done more than any other men to bring this Conference to its present state of prosperity, have always kept their families settled. They were thorough itinerants themselves, but their families were local. Among those already in Abraham's bosom, who ever made more tracks in this Conference, and performed more effective ministerial labor, than Joel Sledge, Michael Drane and John Larkin? And among the living, who have so nearly traveled over our whole territory, in their itinerant career, as Abram Crusty, Robert Cole and Absalom Brummett? And yet they seldom, and some of them never, moved their families."

"If you please, brethren," said the Bishop, "we must stop this discussion and go to work. We have here twenty ministers, whose families, it is said, can not be moved; and we can not, nay, we dare not, separate them from their families. They must be accommodated some where in reach of home; at least near enough to be called there in any emergency, such as dangerous sickness, or death in their households. If the location of their families is an evil, as Brother Reedum supposes, it must be submitted to for the present, for 'what can not be cured must be endured.' Come, I guess you have got them all stationed in your minds already; please tell the Secretary to what charges to append

their names, that we may get to a suitable landing place by the supper hour."

"I think," said Jackson Innis, "there will not be the least difficulty in fixing the appointments of eighteen on the list, but there are two of what we call *knotty cases*, and I doubt whether you get them down before some time next week; and it is likely then that they will have to take appointments similar to the one given to Jacob Sprouts to-day."

"Well," said the Bishop, "just give the Secretary to understand where he shall put down the names of the eighteen good cases, and let the '*knotty cases*' lay over, for as good humored as I generally am, if you detain me much longer at this point, I may begin to get a little '*knotty*,' too."

We then took up the districts in order, and, except in several instances where two or three circuits had petitioned for the same man, we found no difficulty in putting the eighteen down as fast as they were called. Just as we finished the list the Bishop, placing his hands together and reverently looking upward, said: "Thanks be given to God that we have such an overwhelming proportion of holy and faithful ministers, who are so earnestly sought after by those who know them best, and that we have so few who are deemed unacceptable!"

"The next thing, brethren," continued the Bishop, "is to find suitable work for the few old and feeble men among us, who are willing and anxious to do what they can, and who can not yet consent to be declared superannuated. They will make good half-hands in any suitable place."

"I do not know, sir," said Brother Reedum, "what we shall do with these half-hands. Our people do not like half work."

"I think it likely, Brother Reedum," quickly interposed the Bishop, "you did not understand what I intended by calling these old and feeble men 'half hands.' I did not mean what you seem to mean by 'half work.' A feeble man may cultivate five acres of land as well and make it as proportionably productive as his more able-bodied neighbor does his ten or fifteen acres. What I mean is, to give these old and much-esteemed servants of the Church small stations or circuits, such as they can do good work on without over-taxing their little remaining strength."

"But, Mr. President," said Randall Cardin, "that looks too much like making a work to suit the man instead of getting a man to suit the work. I think we should make all our charges large enough for men fully effective, and when men become otherwise, either by age or incidental debility, we should make some other disposition of them, and not reduce the work to their capacity."

"I think just otherwise, Brother Cardin," replied the Bishop. "These old veterans are as 'full of faith and the Holy Ghost' as ever they were; can preach as well as they ever did, though not as often, perhaps, by half; they are as safe disciplinarians as in their best days, and can do as effective pastoral work as ever, though not so much in quantity as formerly; and it would be a great loss to the Church to be deprived of their mature and valuable services. Paul once said, 'as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel;' and so say

these well-tried men, and I am for giving them a favorable opportunity to do it."

"But, Mr. President," said William Ransom, "some of our old men are not very popular, especially with the young people and children. They say they would rather have pastors more suitable to their own age."

"I can tell you, Mr. President," said Josephus Hartford, "why Brother Ransom talks that way. Abram Crusty has long been a near neighbor of his, and the dear old man is so abrupt in all he says and does, and withal has such a vinegar-looking face, that there is something repulsive in his whole mien, and I do not wonder that he is so unpopular among the young folks. But he is the exception, and not the general rule. Most of our old men are very sweet-spirited, and full of love and warm-hearted affection for children especially. There, for instance, is Joseph Burgess, with his bald crown, and Grecian face, and laughing eyes. No man sheds more of the light of heavenly love, joy and gladness over the family circle than he does. The 'old folks at home' give him a hearty welcome whenever he visits them; the children and servants look on his advent as a sort of jubilee, and claim, at least, a partial exemption from work, that they may hear his lively and instructive talk, and unite with him in 'a word of prayer,' as he calls his very appropriate family devotions, consisting generally of reading and expounding a paragraph of Scripture, singing and prayer. I was at Brother Amos Smith's one night when he came there, and I felt ashamed of myself to think I had not the sanctified talents to interest, instruct and sway a whole family as he had. The old people seemed to be transformed into joy

and gladness as soon as he came in ; the children came running in to greet him as soon as his arrival was announced to them ; the servant that came in to recruit the fire laid his armful of wood on the hearth, and turned round to shake hands with ‘ Brudder Burgess,’ as he called him, and then it seemed as if he would never get done fixing and refixing his wood on the fire, and sweeping about the hearth, that he might enjoy as long as possible the conversation of the old preacher. When he finally started out, Brother Burgess said to him, ‘ Brother Tom, tell the folks I’m here, and will be glad to see them in at prayers after supper.’ I’ll tell ‘um, sure,’ said Tom, ‘ an dey’ll all come as can, I know.’ When supper was over I happened to take my seat where I could see, through a door left ajar, Brother Smith’s oldest daughter and a servant woman in the dining-room washing up the supper furniture ; and, without saying a word to each other, they frequently stopped, dishcloth in hand, to listen to the religious incidents and ministerial anecdotes which the lively old man was relating. And he, Mr. President, is only a fair specimen of the few relics of a past generation we have left among us. And now Brother Ransom would have us believe that they are not very popular, especially among the young people and children. I know that some of our single men are very popular among the pious young ladies who are anxious to get good husbands, and also with fond parents who would like to see their daughters married into safe hands ; but take the younger preachers generally, and they have nothing like the universal popularity of the old and well-tried soldiers of the cross.”

"If your old ministers," said the Bishop, "are not popular with those whose good opinion is worth having, it is either because they have not been as prudent and faithful as they ought to have been, or because your people have been badly taught as to how they should esteem 'them which labor among them and over them in the Lord, and admonish them.' The apostle tells us that such should be 'esteemed very highly in love for their work's sake.' Nothing gives me a poorer opinion of the good sense and personal piety of a member of the Church than to hear them speaking disrespectfully and disparagingly of their old ministers, who have spent all the prime and strength of their lives in striving to enlarge and build up the Church."

"But, Mr. President," said Brother Reedum, "there is still another objection to making small charges for the accommodation of these elderly and feeble brethren; *i. e.*, their inability to support a preacher and his family."

"Rather say, Brother Reedum," replied the Bishop, "their *unwillingness* to support a minister and his family. Our people are as able to support their ministers as other denominations are to support theirs, and you know it is no uncommon occurrence for one or two small churches belonging to some of our sister denominations to pay their pastors from six to fifteen hundred dollars annually for their support. Our old ministers generally have small families, and having already reared and educated most of their children, their expenses are much lighter than formerly, so that small charges can sustain them if they have willing minds. It is a part of our economy to avail ourselves of all the gifts and

graces of the entire Church for the enlargement and edification of the whole body of Christ; hence we ought to get all the labor we can safely obtain from our old veterans. In truth, it would be an act of great injustice to them and their families, and also to the Church, to elbow them off and lay them aside before their time for retirement comes. This would not only deprive the Church and the world of some valuable service they are yet able and willing to render, but it would afflict their own hearts, and make the evening of life dreary and dark with them; in addition to which it might—as I have known it to do in several instances—wound the feelings of their children, and alienate them forever from a Church capable of such gross injustice to men who had borne the burden and heat of the day in ‘labors abundant’ to subserve her interests.”

“Well, after all that has been said, Mr. President,” resumed Brother Reedum, “I do not see why these dear old brethren can not get their consent to retire on the superannuated list, and repose quietly—and I may add honorably—on the laurels already won.”

“I must confess my surprise,” rejoined the Bishop, “to hear such a suggestion from a minister who glories in being a follower of our own great and good Wesley. Have you not sung hundreds of times, Brother Reedum,

‘Happy, if with my latest breath  
I may but gasp his name;  
Preach him to all, and say in death,  
Behold! Behold! the Lamb!’

Is it not a favorite motto among us to ‘cease at once to work and live?’ Do we not honor men all the more who die at their posts—who fall amid the din of the battle-field with their harness on and their faces to the

foe? And would you deprive these old heralds of the Gospel—these old warriors of Christ, covered with honorable scars—of their long-sought and long-coveted privilege of dying at their post; of proclaiming their Savior with their latest breath; of going right from the battle-field to glory? No, brethren, you must provide a place for each of them, and a good place, too. How many have you of this class?"

"Only five," plaintively said Gray Lester, wiping the tears from his eyes, which had fallen like rain drops under the last remarks of the Bishop.

"Only five!" said the Bishop. "Well, you can soon find suitable places for that number; please do it at once."

After a little consultation, two of them were appointed to small stations. A wealthy and populous circuit of moderate size was divided into two charges, but included in one Quarterly Conference, for two others; and the fifth one was placed in charge of a large colored church and congregation in one of our principal cities. This being done, the Bishop said:

"We will have a short session after supper, brethren, for the purpose of selecting suitable men for our colored missions, and for the Presiding Eldership. For the present we are adjourned."

## CHAPTER VIII.

The Bishop's Appropriate Prayer—Anti-Scriptural and Scriptural Shouting—The Qualifications Necessary for a Pastor of Colored People—The Obligation of Preaching the Gospel to the African Race—Friendly Contest for Jesse Dines—Necessary Qualifications of a Presiding Elder—As he is a Representative, so Ought he to be a Model Minister—Quotation from Bishop McKendree—Reference to Deceased Presiding Elders—Timely Lunch—Billy's Description of Abram Crusty's Sermon on Lukewarmness.

The Council met after tea at the usual time, and the introductory prayer was offered up by the Bishop. As we had met for the double purpose of selecting suitable pastors for the colored missions, and to nominate from the body of Elders a few suitable to preside over districts the coming year, the Bishop referred in his prayer to the great importance of having ministers of the right stamp to fill these delicate and responsible stations, and then most earnestly implored the Great Head of the Church, who knoweth the hearts of all men, to give us special direction in all our deliberations, and especially in our final choice; to which all present responded a hearty Amen!

“How many colored missions have you on your list, Brother Howe?” inquired the Bishop.

“We have nine,” was the answer given

“I was thinking you had more, from the large number of colored members you have in your Conference,” replied the Bishop.

“A large number of our colored members,” said Zedekiah Reedum, “are included in our regular charges, and are served by the pastors with systematic faithfulness; in addition to which we have several self-supporting colored charges that we do not include in the list of missions.”

"But we must include them in our work to-night," said the Bishop, "for it is just as important to have the right sort of men on our colored charges as it is on our colored missions. And let me remind you, brethren, that every good preacher is not suitable for work of this sort. There are some men who can preach acceptably to white congregations, and, notwithstanding, they would not be suitable for our colored charges and missions. Some are not sufficiently communicative—they have not acquired the ability—and perhaps can not easily acquire it—of adapting their language to the capacity of the negro. I do not mean by this remark that a preacher must necessarily violate either the rules of grammar, pronunciation or logic, for he need not; and he ought not to do either. But he should adopt a plain, Peter Parley style, such as we would use in making our little children understand us. He should also take his illustrations from the implements of husbandry, clearing and inclosing land, planting seed, cultivating and harvesting a crop, the effects of rain and sunshine, and from such other sources as the negroes are most familiar with. Every essential doctrine and duty of Christianity can be brought to the most ordinary negro capacity by a preacher who has studied their grade of intellect, and can suit his language to their comprehension. Another very essential matter is to get preachers who know how to influence and control them in their religious exercises. One of our great difficulties among our intelligent white congregations is to get them sufficiently excited on the subject of their personal salvation to act promptly and earnestly in their efforts to secure it; while one of our most common difficulties

among the colored people is to keep them from becoming too wild and frantic with excited feelings to act soberly and discreetly in 'working out their salvation with fear and trembling.' In restraining them it is necessary to be prompt, but not dogmatical and harsh. I knew a missionary who uniformly and successfully adopted the following measures to keep his colored congregations from swaying about and making a noise while he was preaching: He would first tell them that 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,' and if they, by jumping up and spinning round, and shouting aloud, diverted the attention of the people from the word preached, or made such a noise that they could not hear it, they effectually barred them, for the time being, from the means of saving faith, because 'faith cometh by hearing' the Gospel. In a few instances, where this method was not successful, he would have them removed from the congregation to such a distance as prevented any further disturbance. This done a few times would generally cure them of making any arrangements to jump and hallo while he was conducting his regular religious services, whether in the way of preaching, holding class or prayer meetings, or love feasts, or administering the ordinances."

"I presume, Bishop," said Brother Lester, "that you are not opposed to religious excitement, nor shouting either, when one feels moved by the Spirit to do it?"

"No, Brother Lester," answered the Bishop, "I am not at all opposed to such religious excitement and shouting as is scriptural, for we have many examples of both recorded in the Holy Bible; but I think, as Christians, we ought to be scriptural in all things; and I see

no authority in the Scriptures for such mechanical and unmeaning bodily contortions and tossing to and fro, and such senseless screaming and hallooing, as I have sometimes witnessed, with mortified feelings, in our colored congregations. Our glorious revivals have been so generally attended with loud shouts, and garments rolled in dust, that I fear some of our people, and preachers, too, have become too favorable to any sort of noise or bodily exercises that professes to be prompted by strong religious feelings. But we should learn to separate 'the precious from the vile' in this as well as in other things, and this we can only do by adhering strictly to scriptural precept and example. We have quite a number of examples recorded in the Bible where the people of God bowed and prostrated themselves before him in their distress, and some instances where they jumped, danced and leaped in some moments of unusual religious joy, but none to justify such unmeaning and voluntary tossings and gyrations as we have sometimes witnessed in our colored assemblies. We find many instances recorded in the Holy Scriptures where people, under every grade of religious feeling, from that of the newly awakened sinner to that of the mature saint, have given vent to the sorrowful or joyful feelings of their full hearts in loud and thrilling accents; but they always did it, not in unmeaning howlings and screamings, but in such systematic language as expressed their feelings, and led others to take knowledge of their state of mind. When Miriam and her associates celebrated the triumphal passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites, and the signal overthrow of their pursuing enemies, they did it 'with timbrels and with dances,' and gave expression to their

feelings by saying, ‘sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously ; the horse and his rider he hath thrown into the sea.’ When David would declare to the congregation of such as feared the Lord his special goodness to him, he cries aloud, ‘come all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.’ And how did he declare it ? By screaming like a panther, or yelling like a savage ? No ! But in such expressive language as might lead them to understand and appreciate his highly excited and joyful religious feelings. The prophet Isaiah would have the inhabitants of Zion to ‘cry out and shout ;’ but how would he have them to do it ? Not in sounds without sense, but in saying distinctly, ‘O Lord, I will praise Thee ; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me.’ It was not out of place at all for the publican to smite upon his breast and say aloud, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner ;’ and if there had been a score, or a hundred other awakened sinners there at the same time, it would have been perfectly ‘decent and orderly’ for every one of them to have uttered the same cry for mercy ; but that cry was very different from mere hallooing, without the utterance of a single word ; there was a world of meaning in what he said. I might call your attention to many other illustrative instances, such as the thousands of awakened sinners on the day of Pentecost, who simultaneously inquired of the Apostles, ‘men and brethren, what shall we do ?’ And to the exultant Church on the liberation of Peter and John, when the whole company ‘lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said : (not tossed themselves about, hallooing and screaming,

but said,) "Lord, thou art God," etc. Even the song of the Church triumphant, though uttered by 'the voice of a great multitude,' and is as 'the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings,' is nevertheless couched in systematic language: 'Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.' But I have said enough to give you my settled convictions about this matter."

"I am very glad, Bishop," rejoined Brother Lester, "to find that you are not opposed to proper religious excitement, nor even shouting, if it is kept within Scriptural bounds."

"No, brother," added the Bishop, "I can not be opposed to what is Scriptural in itself, and performed in a Scriptural way. I am fully satisfied that the indulgence of strong religious emotions in appropriate gestures and language is one of God's appointed means of melting and moving the hearts of others. I once knew a saintly lady who generally had 'a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord' at almost every meeting, whether for preaching, prayer or class; but I never knew her to disturb the regular routine of religious worship. In class and prayer meetings, and love feasts, she would improve her time to speak or lead in prayer, in giving utterance to her full heart; or she would wait until the regular services were over, and then commence talking in melting language to those around her, quoting appropriate passages of Scripture, or parts of hymns, as expressive of her overflowing feelings, interspersed with words of exhortation to her unconverted friends, or of comfort and encouragement to her fellow-Christians; and often have I seen a large part of the congregation

linger to hear her gracious words until many of them would be bathed in tears. But, brethren, we have almost lost sight of our starting point. What we desire to do to-night is, to select warm-hearted ministers—‘men full of faith and the Holy Ghost, for our colored charges and missions; but men at the same time so capable of controlling their sable audiences as to have all things done ‘decently and in order.’ Now begin to look round for such men.”

“But, Bishop,” said Randall Cardin, “do you not think that we can safely employ some of our young men, and some older ones, too, on the work who are not very acceptable among the whites, and save our best preachers for the regular circuit work?”

The Bishop answered, “Some of our young men may do, but as a general rule I would prefer not to appoint them until they are ordained Elders, unless it is where they can secure the services of ordained local preachers to administer baptism and the Lord’s supper whenever and wherever there is a call for either; but as to appointing such preachers as are not very acceptable among the whites, I am utterly opposed to it. If they are not acceptable as pastors on our regular circuits, I fear they would be found totally unsuitable for work among the colored people.”

“Yes!” interposed Brother Hartford, “for there was Orrin Mandell, who proved to be so no-account in the regular work that it was almost impossible to impose him on any circuit; so we, as a sort of *dernier resort*, put him last year on Cooper’s Creek Colored Mission. When a sensible negro man, belonging to Major Bladen, who had some knowledge of his standing in the

Conference, heard of his appointment to their mission, said, ‘de colored people did not want a preacher dat de white folks would’nt hab; for my part I aint gwine to hear him of my own accord.’

“He took a sensible view of it, brethren,” said the Bishop, “except his determination to turn his back upon the house of God, because the pulpit was temporarily filled by an incompetent minister; he ought to have adhered to the house for the sake of its Owner, and to the Gospel for the sake of its Author, and patiently waited for a better preacher next time. But a preacher that will not do for the white people, as a general rule, will not do for the blacks. We must magnify that department of our work to its legitimate importance in public estimation, and make it honorable by placing our most reliable and experienced ministers in charge of it. No man, however exalted in talents or office, should feel that it is any letting down of his dignity to be appointed in charge of the work ameng our colored population. Having admitted that they are identified with the great family of man, that they are equally involved in the ruins of the fall with ourselves, and as equally interested in the redemption by Jesus Christ, we ought to use just as efficient means to bring them to sincere repentance and true faith as we would in behalf of any other branch of our apostate race. And our responsibility is peculiar in regard to the servile race of these Southern States. To a very great extent they seem to be providentially delivered over to the Christian care of the Methodist Episcopal Church. With the exception of our Baptist brethren in some places, other denominations, except in a few instances, pay but little attention

to them. And when the wealthy members of our churches become alive to their responsible relation to their servants, and determined to have them preached to and catechised, they generally apply to us to do it, from the fact that they can not secure the services of their own ministers. There is another item to be taken into the account in selecting men for this important field, which generally yields such a rich harvest of souls when properly cultivated, which is, that we can only gain access to the colored population through those who have control over them, many of whom are among the most intelligent and refined people in the land; and we can only obtain and retain their patronage by appointing such ministers as will be received as suitable associates for their families. Many of them are not members of any church, while many others are members of other Christian communions; and it would certainly be calculated to depreciate our ministry in their estimation to send them mere novitiates, so unpolished in style and so rude in manners as to be contemptible in their eyes."

"I wish to ask you one more question, Bishop," said Brother Reedum, "before we begin to station our missionaries. As there is a wide difference of opinion in our Church, North and South, as to the moral and intellectual capabilities of the colored race, which is known to all the country, would it not be best to appoint only such ministers to this work as are well acquainted with the negro character?"

The Bishop replied, "It would certainly be improper at this time to appoint ministers of acknowledged abolition proclivities to this department of our work, as

such would be rejected by many of the planters, and looked upon with embarrassing suspicion by most of our Southern people; but I do not think it necessary for them to be personally connected with the colored race, either by having them apprenticed to or employed by them. Some of our safest ministers are not able to employ constantly servants of any description; and others are not willing to do it while they continue moving their families from place to place, as they might, now and then, have to leave a favorite servant behind in order to avoid the separation of husbands and wives. Under such circumstances they prefer to do without or hire temporarily, only as they may need them. All we want is men who have sense and piety enough to take a Scriptural view of the relation existing between master and servant. Our Church is neither abolition nor anti-abolition; and as ministers professing to be governed by the example and teaching of Christ and the Apostles, we dare not meddle ourselves, pro or con, with the civil institutions of the country. Our sole business is to preach, to both master and servant, that blessed 'Gospel' which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." We are 'debtors both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and the unwise; the master and servant; so that as much as in us is' 'we must preach the Gospel faithfully to all men, regardless of their social and civil relations; and by so doing we will be instrumental in securing the safety and happiness of both master and servant in time and eternity; for while a pure Bible Christian makes a master a better master, and interests him in the personal happiness and salvation of his serv-

ant, it has an equal tendency to make the servant more trustworthy, and better in all his relations, whether to his employer, his own family, or his fellow servants. Let us, then, look out the right sort of men for this work—men capable of taking a sound Scriptural view of the relationship of the two races in our country, as entailed on us by our ancestors; and men who are acquainted with the history, physiology, and intellectual calibre of the Hametic race, and we shall have nothing to fear, whether they have been heretofore personally acquainted with slavery or not. And now, brethren, I have described the class of ministers I want for this work; please take up the districts in order and name the men.”

This was soon done, except in a few instances, where two or three Presiding Elders wanted the same man. There was quite a friendly contest for Jesse Dines, as he excelled in this department of the work, but the Bishop finally decided that Brother Hartford should have him on the new mission on Stillwater. It is very well at such times to have a safe umpire whose word is law, or I know not where our brotherly contests for the same man would end.

This important link in our chain of appointments being supplied, the Bishop immediately called our attention to the subject of fixing the Presiding Elders for the coming year. He reminded us that Brother William Ransom's time was out on the Middle River District by limitation, and that his place there would have to be supplied by a new Presiding Elder; and that the formation of a new District, which was in contemplation, would make an additional Presiding Elder necessary; and,

moreover, though nothing had yet occurred to justify the discontinuance of any one who had charge of a District the preceding year, if anything of the sort should occur, he would like to be ready to supply the vacancy with a suitable successor. He further remarked that though it was his disciplinary prerogative 'to appoint the Presiding Elders,' he always desired the best counsel he could get in regard to each case, and then reasonable time to deliberate on the subject before a final decision.

"And now, brethren," said the Bishop, "I will first tell you what sort of Elders are suitable for Presiding Elders, and then it will be easy for you to decide who are not suitable; for every traveling Elder has not the talents indispensably necessary for a Presiding Elder, nor is every minister qualified to fill the office who may indulge aspirations that way. ' In addition, then, to the all-important qualifications of deep and uniform personal piety, industrious and studious habits, close and impartial attention to all his disciplinary duties, and an ardent and steady zeal for the cause of Christ, well tempered with knowledge, he must be a man of good reliable pulpit abilities as to manner, language, composition and unction. From his position, as the first subordinate officer below that of General Superintendent, and the highest officer on a District, he is in every sense a representative man. As a chief minister, he should not only be able to explain, but, if necessary, to defend our doctrines, Church government and usages against the attacks of all opposers. There are many persons belonging to, or patronizing, other branches of the general Church who seldom hear a sermon from a minister

of our Church, except at a quarterly or camp-meeting at the hour usually occupied by the Presiding Elder, and they are apt to form their estimate of Methodist preaching by such as they hear on these occasions; and if the Presiding Elder should fall quite below mediocrity, or if he should leave his points unguarded, or his positions unsupported by scriptural arguments, or if he should indulge in a spirit of bitterness against other Christian communions, or even denounce popular vice in an unauthorized way, he not only injures himself as a preacher, but he also injures his brethren in the ministry, whose representative he is on those popular occasions. A Presiding Elder should not be a man controlled by sudden impulses and prone to run into extremes; but he should possess a well-balanced judgment and great equanimity of temper, so that when others become excited in the debates of a Quarterly Conference, he can, by his calmness and Christian temper, overcome the risings of ill-temper and turbulence in them. In any matter of difficulty between those under his charge, or any debatable question in a Quarterly Conference, he should never take sides for or against any person or measure until the proper time comes, and then he should give his opinion calmly, but firmly, and sustain his decision by the law of the Church. A Presiding Elder, to be a good administrative officer, should keep himself well posted on every point, great and small, in the Methodist discipline, for his opinion will often be asked both by the ministers and laity of the Church. In order to give others the why and wherefore of the peculiarities of our Church, he should be familiar with its origin and history from the beginning to the present

time. He should make himself well acquainted in detail with every Church interest on his District, and with the talents and family circumstances of all his preachers, that he may impartially represent them in Conference and in the Council. One thing especially should never be lost sight of in selecting a minister to fill this conspicuous and important office in our Church, which is, that he should be a man that may be safely imitated in all things. Young preachers especially, both local and itinerant, are very prone to copy the manners, gestures and intonations of voice of a favorite Presiding Elder, and he should be as near a model man in these, as well as in all other respects, as we can command."

"Well! well!" said Jackson Innis, "I was thinking that Presiding Elder timber was quite plenty in our Conference; but, according to your views of the matter, Bishop, I begin to think it is very scarce, and I fear its scarcity is the main reason why some of us, who are so incompetent, are retained in the office."

"I made no allusion," the Bishop replied, "to any supposed incompetency in the present Board. But I will now venture to say this much, that if any of you do not fill up passably well the brief outlines of the qualifications necessary in a Presiding Elder which I have just drawn, should you be re-appointed, I trust you will constantly pray and labor hereafter to come up to the mark; for I assure you, brethren, it is no light matter for a minister to be the observed of all observers in a district where he has the pastoral oversight of from fifteen to twenty traveling and from thirty to forty local preachers, from fifteen hundred to several thousand

church members, to say nothing of the vast multitudes of non-professors who attend his ministry."

"Your remarks, Bishop," said Brother Hartford, "on the qualifications necessary to enable a minister to fill the truly responsible office of Presiding Elder are just and proper; and could I think it right to shrink from responsibility that comes upon me in a lawful way, most gladly would I decline the responsibilities and labors on a district. But, as I subscribe to a remark once solemnly made by Bishop McKendree, that 'no man incurs a more fearful responsibility than he who shrinks from that legitimately laid upon him,' I dare not say either that I will not, or can not be a Presiding Elder; but I am no candidate for the office, and the sooner my services can be dispensed with in that department the better will I be pleased."

"It is a great relief to one's feelings," remarked Brother Ransom, "to know that we have the right sort of ministers to represent the interests of the Church on our districts. When we have such men in the Presiding Eldership as were our deceased veterans, Joel Sledge and John Larkin, I never have an uneasy thought about what they may do. I take it for granted that they are doing, and everywhere will continue to do, the best they can, and that every interest of the Church is safe in their hands. But we have had a few men in that office that I never thought of without having a sort of undefinable dread to come over my mind. They were so inexperienced, had so many weak points and sharp corners in their characters, I would feel constantly afraid that they would do something, I could not tell what, that would bring reproach on the office, and wound the

interests of the Church. Do let us have, if possible, men of experience, and every way reliable to supply our districts."

"Well, brethren," said the Bishop, "we have nearly consumed our time. Please give me the names of four or five Elders that you think would do for Presiding Elders, and I will think and pray over the matter until next Monday afternoon, when we expect to revise the districts, and then we will appoint the Presiding Elders."

After a short consultation the requisite number of names were handed to the Bishop, after which he informed us that there would be no further meeting of the Council until Monday, at 3 p. m., as he would have to spend the afternoon of Saturday in filling up his certificates of ordination in order to have them ready for the ordinations on the Sabbath; and as he would be expected to preach on the Sabbath, he wished some time to seek a preparation of his heart, as well as his head, for the duties of the pulpit.

Just as we adjourned, our colored friend Billy came up again with his waiter, containing an ample lunch, which the Bishop invited us remain and partake of. To an indolent man this might seem like "needless self-indulgence," but after the wear and exhaustion of such a day's labor as we had just closed, it was refreshing to indulge in a few crackers with suitable condiments.

"Well, Brother Billy," inquired Jackson Innis, while we were lunching, "were you at Church to-night?"

"O yes, sir," answered Billy; "I mose allers goes of nights. You see I jes has my evening jobs to do, and my marster and missus tells me dat's all I's got to do,

an ef I'll do dat I can go to meetin' ebery night while Confrence lasts."

"Who preached for you to-night, Billy?" inquired Brother Innis.

"One old brudder," replied Billy, "dat dey call Mr. Crusty, or some sich a name."

"O yes," replied Brother Innis, "it was our old Brother Crusty. What sort of a sermon did he give you? A good one, no doubt, and I reckon a pretty plain and pointed one, too."

"Yes," answered Billy, "he done all dat, sure. He took for his tex de 'pistle to de Laodishan Church, whar it speaks of dey bein neider cold nor hot, but sorter 'twix and 'tween, so dat de Lord was gwine to spue dem out ef dey didn't wake up an git more 'ligion. I tell you Mars Innis, he did come down on sleepy preachers, and half cold and half hot Christians awful heavy. An he said what made it de more dang'rous was, dey don't know dey is asleep, but think dey is wide awake, an doin' mighty well, until, fuss thing dey know, de Lord spues 'um right out. 'O,' says I to myself, 'is dat Billy? Whar's my evidence dat I am dis night a chile of God? What I once had wont do unless I know's I's got it now.' I tell you I 'gun to rake 'mong de ashes 'bout my heart to see what was dar. An when I felt dat I had de same witness dat I am still a chile of God, an dat I still love de Lord an all his people jus like I did de fuss night he spoke peace to my soul—only a good deal more so—I said, 'Glory to God! I feel all's right wid me yet!' I bleve, Mars Innis, it's bes to hab a few sich preachers as ole Brudder Crusty, jus to keep people from gwine to sleep in 'ligion; or to wake dem up ef

dey should fall asleep. O, dat's awful to think 'bout; dat a man as once had de love of God in his soul can go to sleep an lose it, an still think he's wide awake an doin well! My Lord, allurs keep us wide awake about our souls, an help us, ebery one, to hole out faithful to de end!"

"Amen!" said all the brethren to Billy's ejaculation, and all felt with him that it was very well to have some such preachers as Abram Crusty to keep up in the Church a spirit of faithful self-examination. The lunch and conversation ended, we went to our quarters for the remainder of the night.

## CHAPTER IX.

Preparations for the Sabbath—Importance and Usefulness of Local Preachers—Doctor Luke Burnhill's Excellent Example—Law and Gospel United in Honorable and Reverend Berry Sheridan—Jerry Lyons a Bad Case—Tatum Muggins Greatly Injured as a Class-leader and Exhorter by an Attempt to Make him a Preacher—A Singular Case of Bronchitis—Robert Cole in Conference—The Impulsiveness of Lemuel Hastings Leads him into Trouble—Absalom Windy, the Bombastes of the Conference—The Characteristics of Zedekiah Reedum, Josephus Hartford, Jackson Innis, Gray Lester and Simon Littleton, in Conference—Maiden Speeches—Nolly Catchum's Judicious Course.

There was nothing unusual in the religious services at the opening of Conference on Saturday morning, nor in the various calls for reports of committees, etc. The Bishop remarked "that any matter of business which did not require immediate attention had better be deferred until all the applicants for Deacon's and Elder's orders from among the local preachers should be disposed of, as that was necessary to be done in order to be ready for the ordinations on the Sabbath." The Committee on Public Worship announced preaching to be on the Sabbath at the usual hours of 11 A. M., 3 P. M., and at night in all the churches in Cherryville, except the Roman Catholic and Protestant Episcopal Churches; and the only reason they did not supply them was simply because they were not invited to do it. Quite a number of the ministers had consented to forego the pleasure of attending the Sabbath services in Cherryville, in order to supply the various churches within from ten to twenty miles around the seat of Conference, and their appointments were also announced by the committee. By far the larger portion of the Conference, however, remained in town to enjoy almost the only Sabbath of rest they have had during the year.

But to return to the business of the Conference. The certificates of the local preachers who had been recommended by the various Quarterly Conferences for Deacon's and Elder's orders were now brought forward by their Presiding Elders as their districts were called in order; and after a scrutinizing examination into their Christian characters, talents, studious habits, improvement, zeal, usefulness and family government, most of them were duly elected. It was truly encouraging to hear how most of them were commended for their improving talents, zeal and usefulness by their Presiding Elders and other ministers who had been associated with them. While they do not feel called to the regular pastoral work, and while their health and providential circumstances are such that they can not itinerate, they nevertheless do effective service in the pulpit nearly every Sabbath; some of them having appointments in destitute settlements as many as twenty miles from home. They do a large share of pioneering in out of the way places, and have in many instances laid the foundation for new churches, and even new circuits. The Deacons and Elders among them are often very serviceable to the unordained itinerant preachers in the way of administering baptism and the Lord's Supper. There was Doctor Luke Burnhill, who came up for Deacon's orders after having been a licentiate near five years, of whom it was said that, notwithstanding his extensive practice, he seldom failed to fill his stated appointments every Sabbath. While he feels providentially called to the practice of his profession, he, at the same time, feels 'inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel,' and he says one duty must not be permitted to dis-

place the other, and that in no case, except one of the greatest emergency, must the greater yield to the less. He lets his patrons all know where his regular appointments are each Sabbath in the month, and requests them, except in cases of pressing necessity, not to send for him until 12 m. on that day, that he may have time to prepare and preach his sermon without interruption. It was said that the people had such great respect for him in both his professions that he was seldom called to visit the sick on Sunday until the close of his sermon, but that he frequently had to make several calls in the afternoon before he could return home. Such is the high order of his sermons, in connection with his zeal and success in the pulpit, that many have urged him to abandon his profession as a physician and give himself wholly to the ministry. His uniform reply is that it is necessary to have godly physicians; and as his family circumstances are such that he could not itinerate without neglecting home duties imperiously incumbent on him as a husband, father and master, he rationally concludes it is not his duty to become a regular pastor. Several other local preachers, who were very poor men, with large families, and had to work hard all the week, were highly commended for the industry with which they improved their little shreds of time in adding to their stock of theological knowledge by reading and study, and for their regularity and zeal in preaching nearly every Sabbath in the year.

All such were elected in rapid succession; and I could but think, as one case after another passed in review before the Conference, what an important place these devoted and self-sacrificing men were filling in the min-

istry of our Church, and how poorly we would get along in many places without their co-operation.

But there are some trying cases among the local as well as itinerant preachers. In some cases the Quarterly Conferences have acted prematurely in licensing men to preach; and by so doing, while they have not made preachers of them, they have greatly injuréd them as class-leaders and exhorters for life. As a general rule no man should be licensed to preach, no matter how much he may urge it himself, or his incautious friends for him, until he gives satisfactory evidence to the Church, by actual experiment, that he has at least the essential elements of a preacher about him. We had two or three painful cases of this sort before us on a recommendation for Deacon's orders. The first was Jerry Lyons; rather a good looking young man, between twenty-five and thirty years of age, with a fair English education. It was said by his representative, "that from boyhood he had manifested a morbid ambition to make a display as a public speaker—that when about grown he seemed anxious to become a political stump speaker, and then for awhile he decided in favor of becoming a lawyer. Finally, having identified himself with the Church during a revival in his neighborhood, he professed a call to preach, of which, however, he could not give a very satisfactory account; but he found some leading men among the few officials composing the Quarterly Conference of a newly-formed circuit quite ready to push him forward, so that he was soon licensed to preach and recommended to the itinerancy. The Annual Conference, however, after scrutinizing his case closely, declined receiving him, but, upon

the motion of a brother, passed a resolution permitting the Presiding Elder to employ him, if he saw proper to do so. Soon after Conference he visited the Presiding Elder and asked for employment, who, by way of giving him a trial, placed him as junior preacher on a circuit. He soon became a very great man in his own estimation—talked much in praise of his own attainments and performances—found fault with and underrated the abilities and sermons of the oldest and most talented ministers among us—and always seemed anxious to preach himself on popular occasions. His harrangues—for sermons they could not be called—consisted of bombastic paragraphs repeated from memory, with as little of doctrinal, experimental or practical Christianity in them as one could well imagine. He gave such unmistakable evidence of having what the preachers call the 'big head,' and was so unclerical in almost every respect, that most people became disgusted with him, and the Presiding Elder felt himself compelled by the force of public opinion to excuse him from any further services on the circuit. He left the work, full of complaints against the Presiding Elder and people generally for not being able to appreciate his abilities. Soon after this he married and settled among his relations, where he taught school some, farmed a little, dabbled in politics a good deal, and attempted to preach at long and irregular intervals. By hook and crook he continued to get his license annually renewed. In almost every case he would attend a protracted meeting or two, just before the fourth Quarterly Conference, where he would professedly take a new start, and say he was going to be more faithful than he had ever been. These annual

renewals at the protracted meetings, in addition to the patronage of several influential relatives in the Quarterly Conference, had enabled him to retain his position as a licentiate, though it was generally admitted that he was no credit either to the ministry or church. The desire to be legally qualified to solemnize the rights of matrimony seemed to be his principal reason for wishing to be ordained Deacon. The minds of many of the official members were apparently made up not to renew his license any more, but the Church where the fourth Quarterly Conference was to sit on Saturday had been engaged in a protracted meeting all the previous week, and Brother Jerry Lyons had got 'powerfully stirred up,' and repeatedly said he was now going to be a Methodist preacher all over, and in order to increase his chances for usefulness he requested the brethren to give him a recommendation for Deacon's orders. Some hesitated to renew his license, but he talked very promisingly to the Quarterly Conference—manifested a good deal of tenderness in the way of shedding tears—so that a majority not only voted to renew his license, but gave him a recommendation for Deacon's orders. And now, Mr. President," said the speaker, "the case of Jerry Lyons is before the Conference."

"I do not think," said John Toby, rising to his feet, "that it need stay before the Conference long; and it is very well that we have the power to arrest the too good natured proceedings of that Quarterly Conference, and thereby relieve both the Church and ministry from any additional reproach that might arise from giving him a higher position until, by his good character, he shall deserve it. I know Jerry Lyons, Mr. President,

and I do not wish to say a single word here against him, except he will not do for a minister of the Gospel; and it is a reproach to all concerned to have any such weak, erring, self-conceited, unimproving sort of man tagged on to the ministry. We have nothing to do with his being licensed to preach—that belongs wholly to his Quarterly Conference—and all we can do is to refuse him Deacon's orders, and send him back to his Quarterly Conference from whence he came. As all our ministers are first licensed by a Quarterly Conference, I am truly sorry that they are not more careful who they elevate to our pulpits, and who they keep there from year to year by renewing their license, when they must know that some of them are no credit either to the Church or ministry."

The recommendation of Jerry Lyons was unanimously rejected, and we took up another disagreeable case, though of a different character. Tatum Muggins, it was said, had all the marks of a good Christian about him, and had fair abilities as a class-leader and Sabbath School Superintendent, both of which offices he had filled with acceptability and usefulness. In filling these offices in the Church he had acquired, by long practice, a considerable talent for extemporaneous exhortation. In order to enlarge his sphere of usefulness he was regularly licensed as an exhorter, and often made a fine impression by his warm-hearted, but disjointed exhortations. Being only an exhorter, the people did not expect him to exercise the functions of a preacher, and they were well satisfied with his declamatory exhortations, especially as they had so much confidence in the goodness of the man. Finally, at a protracted meeting,

where there was but one preacher for several days, Brother Muggins was invited a number of times to address the congregation; and he was so much in the spirit, and spoke so fluently and with such manifest effect, some of the leading officials thought he ought to be licensed to preach. When the subject was mentioned to him he promptly told the brethren 'that he did not think he had what is usually considered among us a divine call to preach the Gospel in a regular way; moreover, he was satisfied with his present position as an exhorter; was happy in it, and did not wish his official standing changed, or to take any new responsibilities on himself.' But the subject once up, it was talked about generally; and he was incessantly urged by some over-officious brethren to consent to be licensed to preach. He often told them, that simply as an exhorter the people did not expect more from him than he was able to do; but if he was licensed to preach, they would then expect him to preach in the common acceptation of preaching, and *that* he feared he would never be able to do. But the brethren brought up many cases where men, with far less learning, and, at the beginning, very unpromising talents, had, in a few years, made able preachers; and they believed with the start he already had he could succeed as well, if not better, than they had done. His sensible reply was, 'that they were called of God to preach, and God made no mistakes in calling men to preach who could not do it; but he did not think he either had the call, taste or talents requisite for a successful preacher.' But the brethren insisted that there was a call to preach through the Church and through providential indications that it would be dan-

gerous to disregard, and he ought, at least, to leave his case to the godly judgment of his brethren. He finally yielded the point, and consented to have his case brought before the Church for a recommendation to the Quarterly Conference for license to preach; and while a few well-trained old members opposed it upon the ground that Brother Muggins admitted that he could not in truth say, 'woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel,' the majority favored it, and he was accordingly recommended. He appeared before the ensuing Quarterly Conference, and, after a hasty and not very satisfactory examination, according to rule, he was licensed to preach. He reluctantly gave up his class and Sabbath School, and permitted appointments to be made for him at various Churches in the circuit, and soon commenced his attempts to preach. He also added quite a number of standard theological works to his library, and tried to cultivate a taste for close consecutive study; but he soon found that he was out of his proper orb, and the whole matter of trying to preach and studying to preach was irksome to his mind, so that he really felt that he had no pleasure therein. He seemed incapable of either any defense or clear exposition of Gospel truth, and he generally succeeded best when he took no text, or left it as soon as he took it, and fell into a sort of disjointed, rambling exhortation. Though all saw that he was not succeeding as a preacher, they feared it might wound his feelings to refuse a renewal of his license, and it was accordingly done four full calendar years. When he became eligible—so far as time was concerned—for Deacon's orders, he was urged by the young preacher who was then in charge of the circuit to let his name come

before the fourth Quarterly Conference for a recommendation to the Annual Conference for Deacon's orders, as his ordination would extend his opportunities for usefulness, especially as there were but few ordained local preachers in the circuit. Brother Muggins yielded to the wishes of the preacher in charge and a few others, and suffered his case to come before the Quarterly Conference for a recommendation, and, after a protracted debate as to his qualifications, he was recommended by a large majority.

"His case, Mr. President," said Brother Cardin, who represented it, "is now before the Conference, with all the information I have to give, except that for more than a year he has seldom spent a Sabbath away from his own Church; and when he has made an appointment to preach, his congregations have been very small. The people say they have full confidence in his Christian character, but that he does not preach acceptably, and they do not believe he ever will be able to do it. I fear the Church committed a well-intended error in almost forcing him into the pulpit in the first instance, and then in trying to keep him there when they had the most indubitable evidence that he could not preach."

"Mr. President," said Brother Crusty, "I have long feared that our people are becoming too fastidious about their preachers, and that there are too many 'itching ears' among them to hear this sky-scraping, bombastic rant that too often passes for good preaching at the present day. They seem to have forgotten that 'God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty - and base things of the

world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.' Brother Muggins has the reputation of being a most excellent man, and though he can not show off like some men in the pulpit, neither his modesty or moderate talents shall be any bar to my voting in his favor."

"Mr. President," said Robert Cole, rising to his feet and leaning on his staff, "the very passage of Scripture which Brother Crusty quoted just now against what he calls the fastidiousness and 'itching ears' of our people, and as a reason why we should place Brother Tatum Muggins under your hands for ordination, furnishes me with a good and sufficient reason for voting against his election to orders. I have not a word to say against his Christian character, but in his case I see none of the apostolic signs that he is chosen of God to preach; for with all his 'foolishness,' he does not 'confound the wise,' and with all his 'weakness,' he does not 'confound the things that are mighty,' etc. I do not say that text has any legitimate application to his case at all; but if it has, it is against him, not in his favor. God's chosen instruments generally accomplish what he designs them to do; but it is in evidence before us that this brother can not preach, and that he accomplishes nothing intrinsically valuable by attempting it. If goodness alone was the only qualification of importance for the Gospel ministry, we might very safely license a large proportion both of the men and women of our Church to preach, for many of them excel in goodness. But if a man can not preach, no matter how good he may be, he can not in any way answer the purposes of

a preacher ; and it is gross injustice to him, as well as the Church, to persist in goading him on to it. I am sorry this brother was ever licensed to preach, for it has thrown him out of his proper sphere of usefulness. I learn that he was doing well as a class-leader and exhorter, and that he was deprived of these offices in order to make a preacher of him ; but, after four years spent in the experiment, no preacher is forthcoming. Now, Mr. President, I believe that justice to an injured man, and to an injured Church, which has been deprived of his useful labors as a class-leader and exhorter, demands that we, at least, start him back to his proper sphere of action, by refusing him ordination ; and it is to be hoped the Quarterly Conference will retrieve its past errors by recalling his license to preach and restoring him to his providential position as an exhorter."

The vote was now taken, and a majority voted against the recommendation ; but a respectable minority favored it, such was their esteem for the consistent Christian spirit and character of the applicant.

There was another recommendation for Deacon's orders that was soon disposed of. A brother, of good education and fair talents for declamation, and withal a prominent citizen, professed a call to preach, and was accordingly licensed, in accordance with the rules of the Church. His license had been renewed for five years, but it was said that having once got the name of a preacher, he seemed well contented with his honorable position, without doing much in the way of preaching. His alleged excuse was that his vocal organs were too feeble, and that he was threatened with bronchitis. It was said, however, by those who knew him intimately,

that he could talk in social circles by the hour, and use his voice with unusual freedom on all occasions, except when he was requested, and even importuned, to preach. His throat was nearly always out of order at such times.

Jackson Innis remarked, "Mr. President, there must have been a mistake somewhere in this brother's case; for I can not believe that an all-wise God would call any man to preach, and then almost immediately deprive him of the ability to do it. I think his election to orders had better be postponed until his vocal organs recuperate. We want laborers and not sinecures in our Lord's vineyard." And so thought most of the Conference.

The next case that attracted particular attention was that of the Honorable and Reverend Berry Sheridan, a practical lawyer, an eminent jurist, and a local minister, who had been preaching acceptably and usefully about nine years. He came to Conference with a recommendation for Elder's orders. The only point that occasioned any debate in his case was, that a few of our ultra members thought that practicing law, preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was incompatible in the same person. As we were getting through with the essential business of the day at an early hour, and as many had heard of the peculiar circumstances of Brother Sheridan's conversion from semi-infidelity to Christianity, they were anxious to have a true report of these things from his own lips; while others, who had heard of his fame as a fluent and cogent speaker, were anxious to hear for themselves; while others still wished to hear his views and experi-

ence in reference to the legal and evangelical professions being united in the same person ; his representative in the Conference asked that he might be called in and requested by the President, in behalf of the Conference, to give a succinct account of his experience and views on the points alluded to ; which request being granted, he remarked, "that for several years after he engaged in the practice of law he tried to be a Deist, and when free from personal and family affliction, and prosperous in business, he thought he was very well satisfied with his sceptical theory ; but he found by oft-repeated experience that whenever affliction came upon him, and he saw his earthly prospects fading and dying, his mind would involuntarily turn to the Christian religion as the only thing that promised comfort in affliction and bereavement, lighted up the dark valley and shadow of death, and gave assurance of a blissful immortality beyond the grave. These thoughts and feelings often led him to fear that his scepticism was a baseless fabric, that would fail him most in his times of greatest need. While his mind was thus vacillating between Deism and revealed religion, he had a little son to fall in the well and get drowned ; and in his deep agony he frequently found himself soliloquizing thus : 'Willie is safe in heaven—he can not return to me, but I can go to him. But how can I go there ? Only by becoming a true Christian.' He now betook himself to reading the Bible, and to a life of daily, and finally almost incessant prayer. After a few weeks of deep penitence for sin he was happily converted, and in the meantime united with the Church. He soon became satisfied that it was his duty to preach the Gospel, and he accordingly entered

the ministry under the rules of the Church; and by God's grace continued in the blessed work until that day. Circumstanced in life as he had been, and still was, he had never felt it his duty to enter the itinerancy, nor to relinquish his profession by which he supported his family; and he believed he often benefited his fellow men by attaining for them the ends of justice. All good law, he said, was founded on the immutable principles of the Bible, and, properly carried out, could only tend to the ends of equity and justice among men; and he saw nothing in the practice of law necessarily antagonistic to the purest and most elevated forms of Christianity. It was true that the practice of law had its peculiar temptations, like every other calling and profession in life, and too many, deluded with the hope of gain, yielded to them; but there was, in his estimation, no more necessity for a lawyer to be dishonest than a planter, mechanic or merchant. He endeavored to watch against and avoid sin in all its forms and degrees, and to live a life of holiness and constant communion with God. He endeavored to connect the spirit and practical duties of religion with all he said and done, and he often felt as devotional in the halls of justice as he did in the house of God. The worst trial he had for a few years after he commenced preaching grew out of the liberties sometimes taken by opposing counsel in their pleadings in referring to his religious and ministerial profession in a way designed to irritate his feelings, and throw him from his usual equanimity of temper; but, upon reflection, he came to the conclusion that none but unprincipled pettifoggers would be guilty of what is so ungentlemanly and dishonorable; and he

could not gratify such want of principle in any man so far as to give way to any ill feeling, or notice him in any way whatever. Since then he had always been enabled to preserve his evenness of temper, and let such fifth-rate lawyers keep all their vituperation on their own side. Finding that they could gain nothing by such a course, the few who had indulged in it gave it up, and he now allowed himself to believe that he was generally respected both as a lawyer and minister; and he frequently availed himself of the privilege of preaching 'repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ' while abroad in the practice of his legal profession. He expressed a hope that he would never be discreditable to our holy Christianity, and that the interests of the Church of his choice would never suffer in his hands. He then feelingly requested his brethren in the itinerancy to give him a place of remembrance in their prayers, that he might fill his providential station in life as well as he hoped they would fill theirs." Such was his evident meekness and humility, united with his affectionate manner, that by this time the tears were falling from many eyes; and as soon as he could retire he was elected without a dissenting voice.

As there was nothing very special from the Plainville District that required my attention to-day, I spent most of the session in seeking my own edification, by listening to the various speakers and trying to form a correct estimate of their respective talents and influence as debaters. Robert Cole, the venerable superannuate already referred to several times, is almost universally respected and beloved by the Conference. Whenever he arises to speak all eyes are upon him, and all expect

to hear something sensible and to the point. He never speaks unless he deems it necessary, and he is always short. Nothing bitter or sarcastic ever falls from his lips. 'The law of kindness' is in his heart and upon his tongue. He seldom makes any reference to himself in his remarks to the Conference, or illustrates or enforces anything he says by his personal experience or history. While his final appeal is to the authority of the Holy Scriptures, he, nevertheless, loves to quote the opinions and example of good and great men to sustain his opinions. In everything pertaining to Methodism, John Wesley, Francis Asbury and William McKendree are high authority with him. He never makes what is called a 'set speech.' His arguments are generally sylogicistic, and his remarks suggestive. His usual mode of proceeding is to arise in his place and say, "Mr. President, I ask leave to *suggest* to the Conference," etc; and then comes the *suggestions*, like so many rays of pure light, revealing the whole subject in debate to the mind in all its bearings; and his mature and sententious *suggestions* are often worth more to the Conference than hours of windy speeches.

Brother Lemuel Hastings is an excitable man; often under the influence of sudden impulses, so that when he gets up to address the Conference he seldom stops at the right place, but dashes off into ultraism, and frequently injures the cause he advocates by going too far, as well as by making cutting remarks against the arguments on the other side, sometimes even involving the intelligence and integrity of the speakers. He often reminds me of a dog running, by sight, after a hare with such rapidity that he runs entirely over it,

and before he can reverse his course and get back it has escaped in another direction. He not unfrequently wounds the feelings of his more sensitive brethren by his ultra positions and heedless remarks; but give him time for the return of sober second thoughts, and he will almost invariably come back on safe ground, and in open Conference make the *amende honorable* to any injured or aggrieved party. I knew him once on Saturday, just before the adjournment of Conference, to make some hasty remarks which were easily construed into a reflection on the body of its members. Soon after the adjournment some one called his attention to what he had said, and to how it had been construed. He saw at a glance how legitimate the construction was from his unguarded and impetuous remarks, and, as a penalty for his impulsiveness, he had to endure much disquietude of mind during the long hours that intervened between then and Monday morning; but, as soon as Conference was opened for the transaction of business, true to the instincts of his piety and general good sense, he asked the privilege to take back the offensive remarks of Saturday, and begged the pardon of any one who might have felt aggrieved thereby.

But the most annoying speaker to many in our Conference is Absalom Windy, of only about eight or ten years' standing as a minister. He really seems very fond of exhibiting himself on the floor of Conference, and springs to his feet on all occasions, as though he thought nothing could be decided right without hearing from him first. Were it not for his acknowledged piety, zeal and usefulness as a minister, his course in Conference would hardly be considered bearable. No matter

what subject he rises to oppose or advocate, he contrives to lionize himself in one way or another before he gets through. I do not know that he really 'thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think.' Perhaps his frequent recurrence to his personal experience and conduct in the way of self-examination has inverted his mental vision, so that he always sees himself before he does any one else. Be that as it may, he certainly seems to be a man of great promise in his own estimation; and by his incessant recurrence to what he has experienced, learned, done and suffered in the itinerancy, he makes the impression that he looks upon his example as worthy to be copied by all the brethren. The personal pronoun *I* is in great demand whenever Absalom Windy is the speaker. Should he ever write a book of a few hundred pages in his usual style of speaking in Conference, it would exhaust all the *I*'s in an ordinary type-font to print it. He speaks of the old men of our Conference as though he thought them all behind the advancements of the age, and the young men as being quite deficient in suitable progressiveness. I learn that his social intercourse partakes largely of his apparent egotism; and that neither old or young can tell anything in his presence of a praiseworthy character that they have suffered or done in the cause of Christ that he does not soon overtop them by relating something greater that he has suffered or done for Christ's sake. He will tell more about his personal adventures and achievements in his brief itinerant career than Robert Cole will tell about his forty-five years of effective labor in the Conference. It is said that 'variety is the spice of life;' and Absalom Windy certainly

presents an additional variety in the family of ministers, but not of a very pleasing caste. But, after all, he is an obedient worker in the ministry, and goes to his appointments with cheerfulness, and zealously attends to his various duties as preacher and pastor. The principal objection to him is that he spends too much of his time in telling 'all the wonders he has wrought.' He may have descended from the Bombastinette family, and is hardly accountable for the high estimation in which he holds himself, as it is an idiosyncrasy of the family. He is so good humored that the preachers generally like him, though some of our business men complain that he spends more time in talking in Conference than any other man.

Zedekiah Reedum is a very dignified personage in our Conference, and speaks to the point in measured and carefully guarded sentences. The young preachers seem very shy of him, and they will, somehow, believe that he is a little aristocratic until they become well acquainted with him, when they generally change their opinion and become fond of his company.

Nothing springs Josephus Hartford to his feet so quick as to catch a word or sentence from a speaker that looks to the remodelling of some old plan, or the introduction of some new one. He is a warm advocate for what he calls the 'old landmarks of Methodism.' He frequently calls our attention to 'the old paths' in which our fathers trod. It is very well to have a few such men in every Conference; but if a majority were of that stamp I fear we would cease to be a very progressive people. We delight to look on Methodist Christianity as a child of Providence, and when a change of

circumstances has rendered obsolete any merely prudential measure, we should not hesitate to remodel it, or even to supercede it by something better.

Jackson Innis and Gray Lester, both having districts to represent, and being decidedly business men, often interest the Conference with their well-timed remarks, though neither of them aspire to the position of a regular debater. There is a spice of eccentricity in the remarks of Brother Innis, and of natural wit in those of Brother Lester, which renders them both pleasant and interesting speakers. In the midst of an earnest debate they often excite the risibilities of the Conference, which checks our nervous irritability and keeps us good humored.

Simon Littleton is really an amusing case. He enters deeply into all the debates of the Conference, though he seems incapable of making anything like an impromptu speech. He usually listens to others with excited feelings until he gets light enough to determine his vote, and then he will spring to his feet and inform the Conference, through the President, how he *intends* to vote, and immediately resume his seat. Whether he does this merely to show that he is there ready and willing to do his part of the voting when voting time comes, or under the impression that a mere announcement of the fact that he intends to vote in a certain way may influence others to follow his example, I am not prepared to determine. I have often thought, however, that it would be as well for him to keep his seat quietly until voting time, and then give his vote without announcing it beforehand.

I am always interested in the first efforts of our junior

members to speak in Conference. We all have to speak just as one item of business turns up after another in rapid succession, without any time for special preparation; and, as a consequence, some of the maiden speeches of our younger members are very imperfect, and delivered with evident embarrassment. It is much easier to preach a sermon on a selected subject, well arranged beforehand, than it is to make an impromptu speech in an Annual Conference, surrounded by scores of the best critics in the land. But I like to see the young men called up; it increases their interest in the business of Conference, and trains them to take their turn in the lead when they shall become the old men of the body.

But, perhaps, one of the most influential debaters in our Conference is Nolly Catchum, a man of mature judgment, coupled with long experience. He has always been a close student, and is evidently a profound and logical thinker. He never leads off in debate in any case, unless it is where he is required to bring it forward, and even then, if it is a complicated case, he often just submits it to the Conference, resumes his seat, and with apparent indifference waits until all the impulsive speakers have traveled over the whole ground of argument on both sides—until they have exhausted their resources; then he will rise up with a good deal of apparent nonchalance and commence a sort of summing up, in which he will show the utter fallacy of the arguments on one side, and the conclusiveness of those on the other; and very generally, at the conclusion of his speech, the vote is taken in accordance with his views. He seems to have two objects in view by wait-

ing until all others have spoken who may wish to speak. One is, to have all the arguments, pro and con, before his mind, to enable him to mature his own opinion ; and the other is, to gain all the advantage he can from the closing speech. He is not only a profound thinker, but he is also an independent thinker. If a case of difficulty is to come before the Conference, he says he does not wish to know anything about it until the testimony on both sides is systematically placed before his mind ; then he can make up his opinion as to its true merits independent of any preconceived view or prejudice. We once had an exciting difficulty between two young preachers, who very imprudently assailed each other in the secular newspapers, and also in pamphlet form. Each brought a supply of his publications to Conference, and circulated them early among the preachers, that they might read and make up their minds before the case was called up in Conference. But Brother Catchum utterly refused to look at one of the documents, and assigned as a reason that he intended to have his mind wholly untrammelled when the case came before the Conference, that he might make up his verdict from the evidence then and there adduced. This course I considered worthy of imitation, for, as Solomon says, Prov. xviii-17, 'He that is first in his own cause seemeth just ; but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him.' Conference adjourned at the usual hour, to meet on Monday morning.

## CHAPTER X.

Saturday Afternoon Recreations and Devotions of the Preachers—The Bishop's Labors Continued—Sunrise Prayer-meeting on Sabbath Morning—Conference Love Feast—Some Differences of Opinion Among the Preachers as to the Extent of Entire Sanctification, and the Time of Obtaining it, Occasions the Orthodox to give others the Benefit of their Personal Experience—The Vastness of Methodist Congregations—The Bishop's Introductory Services, Prayer and Sermon—Ordination of Deacons—An Affecting Scene at the Close—Josephus Hartford's Sermon at 3 P. M. on Entire Sanctification—Its Effect—Baptist Lady's Experience—Ordination of Elders—Bishop's Holy Cheerfulness in the Evening—Profitable Debate on the Subject of Entire Sanctification—The Bishop's Views and Experience—An Additional Experience.

After the adjournment of Conference on Saturday the ministers who had no appointments to preach on the Sabbath passed the afternoon in pleasant recreations, in accordance with their various tastes. Several drove around the city in order to visit the various objects of interest in the way of public buildings, gardens and manufacturing establishments; others walked to the cemetery and spent an hour or more in the city of the dead, looking at the diversity of monuments which affection had reared to mark the final resting place of dear departed ones, and in copying off such epitaphs, couplets and stanzas as they wished to remember. The graves of two of our former fellow laborers were searched out and looked upon with affectionate remembrance, while hope pointed to the skies and said, 'Yonder you may meet them again!'

Brother John Toby proposed that they should sing at the graves of their departed brethren that favorite hymn with which Bishop Roberts so often closed his Annual Conferences, commencing, 'And let our bodies part,' beginning at the fifth verse:

“O let our heart and mind  
Continually ascend ;  
That haven of repose to find,  
Where all our labors end !  
Where all our toils are o'er,  
Our suff'ring and our pain ;  
Who meet on that eternal shore,  
Shall never part again.”

While they were singing a spirit of weeping came on the group, and, pressing each other's hands, they said in conclusion, ‘by the help of God we will meet them there !’

Several of the preachers were seen taking solitary walks toward the dense forest south of the city, no doubt for the purpose of being once more alone in communion with their own hearts and God, as is their daily custom in the rural districts, where their closet for devotion is generally the silent grove. There was, at least, one exception to the rambling disposition of the preachers during this short holiday afternoon in the person of Enoch Estling. He is, emphatically, a man of books ; and having just procured a new and popular work on the subject of ‘holiness,’ in which it is treated as ‘the great central Idea of Christianity,’ he remained most of the afternoon and evening in his room, deeply absorbed in its edifying passages. He was heard to say next day that he was now more fully convinced than ever that Wesley and Fletcher had taken the Scriptural view of entire sanctification, and that he was determined to study and preach it more than he had done heretofore.

But our Bishop was still closely at work. No respite for this officer during the session of an Annual Conference, except barely enough time to give wearied nature its essential rest and refreshment. As soon as dinner

was over he returned to his room, and called for me to give out from a list he had the names of all the Deacons and Elders elect that would be present next day for ordination, that he might fill up the parchments and have them all ready for distribution as soon as the ordinations were over. He was very careful to have every name in full, and correctly spelled. As soon as we got through he said, "Now, Brother Howe, I will excuse you, as I must begin my preparation for the labors of the coming Sabbath. I hope to enjoy that spiritual rest to-morrow which is known only to the people of God, but there will be but little rest for this old and frail body of mine."

I retired to my room to write an obituary of one of our deceased brethren for the printed minutes, which task had been assigned me by the Chairman of the Committee on Memoirs; and during the remaining part of the evening I repeatedly heard the Bishop walking back and forth in his room as though he was studying and adjusting his sermon for the Sabbath. Several brethren called to see him in reference to their appointments, but I requested them not to interrupt him, as he was diligently seeking a preparation of both head and heart to give us an appropriate sermon next day. I told them the final seal would not be put on the appointments for several days, so that they would have ample time to see the Bishop after the services of the Sabbath were past. I inferred from the way two of them talked that they did not stand very fair with their Presiding Elders, and did not expect as much accommodation from them as they desired. But I see I have got quite away from my original purpose in this chapter, which was to

give a succinct history of the Conference Sabbath in Cherryville. I will now return. The sacred duties and exalted privileges of this holy day were commenced by a sunrise prayer-meeting at the Methodist Church, which was attended by a large proportion of the preachers and quite a number of the laity of both sexes. The remarks of Jesse Dines, who had been requested to take the lead, were very appropriate and feeling; the singing was lively and the prayers fervent; two of them, especially, were such as melts and moves the heart. The Bishop and all the ministers who were appointed to preach that day were particularly remembered by those who led in prayer. They unitedly prayed that they all might be filled with 'faith and the Holy Ghost,' and be 'endued with power from on high.' I could but think how it would cheer the hearts of these holy men to hear these fervent prayers in their behalf; but most of them were already far away in the country, where they had been conveyed the evening before, that they might be near their appointments on Sabbath morning. A sweet, heavenly spirit pervaded the morning prayer-meeting, and we felt that it was good to be there; and could but regret that any of our brethren, by a little self-indulgence in bed, should deprive themselves of such a season of sweet communion with the people of God.

At 9 o'clock A. M. we re-assembled to enjoy the Conference love-feast. The lay members seemed inclined to yield the privilege of speaking in love-feast to the ministers, and they readily embraced the opportunity. A recent development of opinion among a few of our prominent preachers on the subject of entire sanctification, as to the time and manner of obtaining this state of grace,

was incidentally the means of adding unusual interest to the rehearsal of personal experience in this meeting. Some few of our ministers had denied the work of entire sanctification as distinct from and subsequent to that of pardon and regeneration. They admitted and insisted on a general growth in grace after conversion, but they denied any distinct conviction of the remains of indwelling sin, except in cases of backsliding; or any distinct seeking after and obtaining an additional blessing known among us as a purification from all inward as well as outward sin, and an entire consecration of the whole man, with all we are and have, to God. One of our prominent ministers, since the assembling of the Conference, had given utterance, in a sermon, to these anti-Wesleyan, and we may add, anti-Scriptural views, which was looked on by many as a side-cut at some brethren who had been recently advocating the doctrine of entire sanctification as an additional blessing after justification, regeneration and adoption. This sermon had given rise to various discussions in private circles among the preachers as to the usual time and manner of seeking and obtaining a pure heart and entire consecration to God, which had aroused the old professors of this doctrine and work of grace to come out boldly on that point in relating their Christian experience.

Thomas Limerick, of about forty years' standing in the Church, near thirty-five of which had been spent in the itinerancy, was the first to speak his experience in love-feast. He said he was an outside seeker of religion ten years before he received an evidence of his adoption into the household of faith. This painful fact he attributed to a determination on his part not to join the

Church until he obtained an evidence of pardon and acceptance; and to his habitually resisting some impressions he had relative to its being his duty to enter the ministry, and it was only when he clearly saw that the Lord would not yield to his terms that he surrendered himself unconditionally into the arms of mercy, and submitted to be saved in God's appointed way. Then it was that he was happily converted, and felt immediately the drawings of the Spirit to seek for complete inward purity, and to be 'filled with all the fullness of God.' He yielded at once to the heavenly influence, and following with a ready will and earnest heart the leadings of the Spirit for only a day or two, faith took hold of the purchased and promised grace, and he had the assurance that 'the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed him from all unrighteousness,' and that he was now wholly the Lord's. He added that he had not always enjoyed the present evidence of that state of grace, but so plain and unmistakable was the evidence at the time he received the blessing, that should he finally apostatise and go down to perdition, he would be compelled to look up from the depths of hell and forever acknowledge that God had, after his original conversion, given him a clean heart and filled him with perfect love.

David Morgan next arose and, after giving a brief account of his early religious history, stated that in the second year of his ministry he was associated with a Presiding Elder who professed and preached the doctrine of entire sanctification according to the views of Fletcher and Wesley, which was the means of leading him to seek, first, a knowledge of the doctrine, and then a personal experience of the great salvation. He had a

distinct and painful sense of in-dwelling sin, and often felt the strugglings of unholy tempers, desires and passions, accompanied with a sense of spiritual want which had never yet been fully supplied. After many prayers and struggles against unbelief, he went into the altar at a camp-meeting with many others, at the invitation of the Presiding Elder, to pray unitedly for a clean heart and an unreserved consecration to God; at which time he was enabled to lay hold of the blessing by faith, and to witness a good confession before many witnesses; and that now it is forever too late for any one to tell him that the doctrine as set forth by Wesley and Fletcher is not Scriptural, for he had *bona fide* experience of its truth.

Next arose Andrew Knighton, who stated that when he was greatly exercised about entering the ministry, he was invited by the Presiding Elder of the District in which he lived to accompany him to several camp-meetings; and while with him he often called his attention to the necessity of purity of heart and entire consecration to God, especially in the Gospel ministry. He set forth the fact that sin existed in the heart as a conquered but not expelled enemy, after conversion, until it was removed by entire sanctification; and sustained his position by sound arguments drawn from Scripture, experience and observation. He was thus convinced of the truth of the doctrine, and at the same time brought to feel the necessity of grace. He was then led to seek the blessing of full salvation from all sin and its concomitant blessings with all his heart. His mind was quite filled with the subject during all his waking hours, until, at a sanctification prayer-meeting held in the altar

at one of the camp-meetings, he was enabled to believe and enter into the rest of perfect love. Thus experience after experience was related, until the whole time allotted for our love-feast was consumed; and while there were shades of difference in the circumstances of each case, there was an agreement in all essential points, and they were just such experimental facts as we often meet with in the journals of Wesley, Mrs. H. A. Rogers, Lady Maxwell and other similar Methodistic works. The believers in the doctrine, as well as the professors of the great salvation, were greatly enlivened and encouraged by such a cloud of the most reliable witnesses, while the few of our brethren in the ministry who had taken opposite ground on this point had nothing to say; in truth, some of them who were known to be in town were not at the love-feast. Why they were absent is not for me to determine.

The tolling of the 'church-going bells' about the city reminded us that it was time to open the doors to admit the vast crowds that had already assembled to hear the Bishop's sermon and to witness the ordinations. The Church was soon filled to its utmost capacity above and below, and for the want of room large companies went away to the other churches, while quite a concourse stood outside about the doors and windows, determined to hear the sermon. I could but feel grateful to God for the numbers and influence of our branch of the general Church. No other denomination in the land can assemble such multitudes of people from all the region round about as usually attend our quarterly and camp-meetings, Annual Conferences and college commencements. **O what a responsibility is thus providentially placed**

upon us! God grant that we may be instrumental in leading these vast multitudes away from sin to holiness, and then to heaven!

A few minutes before time to commence public worship the Bishop came in without ostentation, and walked as meekly to the pulpit as the most unpretending preacher in our Conference. As he had previously requested me to assist him in the ordinations, I was invited to a seat in the pulpit. On entering the pulpit, the Bishop knelt in silent prayer a few moments, and if one might judge from his earnest whisper, and the tears he wiped from his eyes as he rose up, it was not a merely formal prayer, but earnest supplication to God to be manifestly present, both with preacher and people, in the helping and saving influences of His Holy Spirit. In his introductory services there was nothing redundant—nothing lacking. The hymns and lessons were of moderate length, and every sentence, word and syllable so distinctly articulated that all in the audience could hear without an effort. The extemperaneous prayer, which was only about eight minutes long, was characterized by humility and fervor, and seemed to embrace every subject necessary to be included in a general prayer. He announced as his text, Mark xvi-15. 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.' Our Bishop is a model preacher. He made no allusion to distressing headache, hoarseness or other bodily indisposition, as though he wanted something to fall back on in case of a failure; expressed no hopes or fears as to the results of his contemplated sermon; made no roundabout exordium, but went right to preaching. The first sentence uttered was preaching,

and preaching relevant to the text; and in a few minutes all eyes were fixed on the speaker, all ears attentive, and all hearts apparently absorbed in one of the best sermons ever delivered. His divisions were natural, and his sermon of practical utility throughout. His first division was, 'The necessity and nature of a divine call to the office and work of the Christian ministry. 2d, The moral and intellectual qualifications necessary to an appropriate and successful discharge of ministerial functions. And, 3d, where this call and these qualifications are faithfully obeyed and used, the infallible success that will attend the Gospel ministry.' He sustained his propositions by plain and concise arguments, drawn from the Holy Scriptures, the history of the Church, individual experience and general observation. His arguments, though brief, were systematically arranged, and stood out in bold relief like the spurs of mountains bathed in the light of the sun; and when he was done you could recall every idea as readily as you can the various points of a road over which you have just passed. Such a sermon is marrow and fatness to the soul, and in addition to the pleasure of listening to its delivery, it furnishes the mind with subjects for profitable reflection for days, and months, and years to come. My heart often glows yet with a sermon I heard Bishop Roberts preach on a similar occasion near forty years ago. Our Bishop to-day was sublime, eloquent and soul-stirring, especially under his last head. With such a certainty of divine assistance, and such an assurance of success, who that feels called of God to the work would ever falter or yield to a feeling of discouragement. I felt that the world might be brought into subjection to

our Divine Master, if we could all enter into the work of our holy calling as the Bishop did in preaching that Conference sermon. The preachers present all seemed to be inspirited afresh for the great work to which they had professed a divine call, and to which they had consecrated their lives. At the conclusion of the sermon, the Deacons elect, both local and itinerant, were called and arranged around the altar from right to left, and the solemn service proceeded according to 'the form and manner of making Deacons.' The Bishop's voice was clear and very impressive. Most of the Deacons seemed to feel the import of the solemn vows they were required to take upon themselves previous to the imposition of hands; and their repetition appeared to re-awaken in the hearts of the older preachers a vivid recollection that they, too, had once taken upon themselves these same vows under similar circumstances. I could but notice, however, how differently men are affected by the same subject. A few of the Deacons had paid unusual attention to their personal appearance, having adjusted their toilet with the utmost precision, as though they expected to be the observed of all observers, and wished to make an imposing personal appearance; and one or two looked around several times during the reading of the lessons, as though they desired to ascertain the amount of attention they were receiving. By far the greater number, however, had paid no extra attention to their outward adornment, and their minds seemed to be wholly absorbed with this additional act of ministerial consecration to God and the service of the Church. Two young men especially, one of them quite youthful in his appearance, were most

deeply affected, and wept throughout the whole service ; and even sobbed audibly when the hands of consecration were laid upon them. They doubtless thought less of the presence of that vast assemblage than any one else, so completely were their minds filled with their vows of entire devotion to the work of the ministry, and yet their tenderness of heart and unfeigned humility attracted the notice of all conveniently situated to see them, and many were the silent ejaculations of that praying congregation, that God would so 'replenish them with the truth of his doctrine, and adorn them with innocency of life, that both by word and good example they might faithfully serve him in the office of Deacons, to the glory of his name and the edification of his Church.' The mother of the younger of the two stood near him during the ordination service, and was one of the most striking personifications of 'a meek and quiet spirit,' coupled with entire devotion to God and the interests of the Church, I ever saw. After the Doxology and Benediction, she quietly approached her son and, laying her maternal arms around his neck, said, 'Now, my son, you are where I have long desired to see you—an ordained minister of our Lord Jesus Christ. O may you ever adorn the honorable place He has assigned you in His Church, and be faithful in keeping your vows to the end of life ; and after having served your generation by 'the will of God,' may you finally fall asleep in Jesus !' Mother and son wept and rejoiced together ; and it would have been difficult to decide which was most highly favored of the Lord—the mother, in having such a son, or the son, in being blessed with such a mother.

At three o'clock, p. m., Brother Hartford preached us one of his characteristic sermons, on the subject of holiness. He took the position that the personal holiness taught and enjoined in the Scriptures evidently implies: First, freedom from all inward, as well as outward, sin; second, the purification of the affections, and their exaltation to a supreme love of God; third, the unreserved consecration of the whole man, with all we are and have, to God, for time and eternity; and fourth, that this state is to be obtained on condition of our seeking expressly for it in God's appointed way, and exercising special faith in reference to its attainableness. Brother Hartford was convincing in his proofs, happy in his illustrations, and soul-stirring in his application. He affirmed—notwithstanding the doubts of the uninstructed and the quibbles of those whose hearts are not set on the pursuit of entire freedom from sin and unreserved devotion to God—that this is the grade of holiness taught in the Bible, and required, not only of the ministry, but of every member of the Church, in order to a scriptural preparation for heaven. The influences of the Holy Spirit were extensively felt among the pious during the delivery of the sermon. The old professors of entire sanctification were greatly comforted by having this long-cherished doctrine so clearly set forth in the light of Scripture, and so ably advocated on such an occasion by such a man as Josephus Hartford; while many who had been loitering by the way in ‘the first principles of the doctrine of Christ’ were greatly stirred up to ‘go on to perfection.’ A Baptist lady who was present was all tenderness during the last half of the sermon, and as soon as she left

the Church she asked one of the ministers who was boarding with her during the Conference, if what Mr. Hartford preached is what the Methodists call entire sanctification? and being answered affirmatively, her tears started afresh, and she exclaimed, 'if that is entire sanctification, I have enjoyed it for many years past' When they were seated in her parlor that evening, she told the minister that she was satisfied of her pardon and acceptance before she was immersed; but after her accession to the household of faith, though she was conscious that she loved God and his people above all things else, and was becoming more and more interested in all that pertained to a religious life, yet she felt that there were 'roots of bitterness' in her heart that were ever ready to spring up and trouble her; while there was an abiding conviction that she did not love God constantly with all her heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; and there was also a constant sense of unsupplied want, which she felt could only be relieved by being 'filled with all the goodness of God.' She betook herself to a careful and prayerful reading of the Holy Scriptures, noticing every passage that either plainly taught or necessarily implied purity of heart and the fullness of the love of God, until she became fully satisfied that there was a higher state of grace for her to enjoy than she had yet attained to, which led her to seek habitually and earnestly for it. One evening, as she retired for private prayer, she was suddenly awed, and almost overwhelmed, with a sense of the immediate presence of God. Just then it was emphatically impressed upon her mind, that if she would only exercise faith in reference to the willingness

of God then and there to give her a clean heart and the fullness of his love, the double blessing would be hers at once. She fell upon her knees, while a tremulous sensation went over her whole frame; but instead of engaging in earnest supplication, as she usually did, she was led simply to look to God, through the advocacy of Christ her Savior, for what she felt he had provided for her, and promised in his holy Word to give her. In a moment she felt that sin was absent from her heart, and that she now loved God with her whole heart, and was entirely His. She further said that she had not always retained an evidence equally bright of being in that gracious state, but she did not believe that she had ever fallen from it, and of late she was more confirmed in the enjoyment of it than ever before; and if this is what the Methodist call being sanctified wholly, she had no further fault to find with them on that point, for she had an experimental knowledge of its truth. After all she did not believe that true Christians differed so much from each other; and if they would only throw away petty jealousies and come together and talk things over in the right spirit, they would find themselves much nearer together than they had hitherto thought themselves to be. Her mind was full of the subject, and she sought opportunities to converse with several of our most experienced ministers in reference to this exalted state of Christian experience, and was greatly edified and encouraged by these holy communings on the subject of holiness.

But I must return from this long digression to the ordination of the Elders at the close of the service. The Elders elect being arranged in front of the altar, the

Bishop proceeded with the ritual as laid down in our Book of Discipline. His voice had become a little husky from the previous labors of the day, but it was sufficiently voluminous to be heard distinctly in every part of the audience. The final consecration of these holy men to the highest functions of the Christian ministry was attended with marked solemnity. The Bishop, assisted by five Elders, among whom the venerable Robert Cole was conspicuous, laid their hands unitedly on the heads of the kneeling candidates, while the Bishop uttered, in tones which betrayed considerable emotion, the prayer of consecration—‘The Lord pour upon thee the gift of the Holy Ghost for the office and work of an Elder in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of His Holy Sacraments; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.’ The sensible influences of the Holy Spirit seemed to pervade the Church, and many, both ministers and laity, felt like saying, ‘Surely the Lord is in this place--this is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’

The sermon of Brother Hartford on Holiness was the means of preparing the hearts of both preachers and people for a due appreciation of the ordination services, and many went away feeling it was good to be there. The Bishop remarked, as we were returning to Col. Warham’s after the service, “that it was the most feeling ordination service he had ever presided over, and that the Church had much of promise and encouragement in such a class of Elders.” From the time we entered our room until late bed time the Bishop was

evidently in a very happy frame of mind. Temporarily released from the wasting cares of the Conference and Council Chamber, and having satisfactorily got through the onerous and responsible duties of the Sabbath thus far, he seemed to give himself up the remainder of the evening to a high state of spiritual enjoyment. Several of our leading ministers called in after the evening service at the Church, and got into an animated discussion in reference to the high ground taken by Brother Hartford in his afternoon sermon on holiness. Among them there was one anti-Wesleyan, as to the necessity of a distinct act of entire sanctification subsequent to conversion; and another, who was on the fence, but evidently inclined to sympathize with the views of our anti-Wesleyan colleague. The first-mentioned brother grew warm in defending his anti-Methodistic positions, and seemed quite inclined to cut off all fair debate by monopolizing most of the time at first by giving out and defending his peculiar views. This I have often noticed in those who assume untenable, or even doubtful, positions. What they lack in argument they try to make up in loquacity, or in disturbing or caricaturing the arguments of such as oppose them. But a brother who had lately given special attention to the study of Bible holiness in all its parts and bearings, and who had the Scriptural proofs, as well as those drawn from our standard authors, at ready command, soon proved too strong in argument for him, to the great satisfaction of most who were present. After the first few rounds the debate assumed an agreeable form, and was carried on in a spirit and manner well becoming earnest inquirers after truth; and though our anti-Wesleyan brother for

the time seemed quite unyielding, he is too good a man not to recur thoughtfully and prayerfully to the subject often; and I am inclined to think that the arguments against some of his positions are so clearly Scriptural that he will ultimately yield to their gracious influence and become himself a professor of entire sanctification and a defender of this Scriptural doctrine. I know, as a Church, we occupy advanced ground on this point of Bible theology, but it is so evidently in accordance with the rich provisions of Gospel grace and the great and precious promises given to us in the Bible, and we have had, and still have, so many reliable witnesses of its truth both in life and death, that all we ask in its favor is for honest seekers after truth to give it a careful examination in the light of the inspired writings, apart from the sophisms of such as oppose holiness—more because they feel but little personal interest in it than from any evidence of its falsity. Toward the conclusion of the debate the Bishop gave his views freely on the subject, and we were quite cheered to find that he was thoroughly orthodox. He told us that early in his ministerial life, after a careful examination of the subject, he was fully convinced of the truth of the doctrine of entire sanctification as set forth and supported by the Scriptural arguments of Wesley, Fletcher, Watson and other standard writers of our Church—that he sensibly felt the need of that state of grace, not only to prepare him for heaven, but to qualify him for the great work to which he felt he had a lifetime call; that he was led to seek it by prayer and fasting; that after a long struggle with an unbelieving heart he was enabled to enter into the rest of freedom from sin and the per-

fect love of God ; and that though, amid the ever-changing scenes of his itinerant life, he had not always enjoyed as bright an evidence of the work as he felt to be his privilege, yet he heartily subscribed to the doctrine, and prayed that he might be more and more confirmed in the enjoyment of the great salvation. The Bishop now gave the conversation a very interesting and profitable turn, by asking Father Cole if, after obtaining the forgiveness of his sins and an assurance of his acceptance in Christ Jesus, he had ever sought and obtained the additional blessing of entire sanctification, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures and as explained and enforced by the standard writers of our Church ? The venerable man, after a short pause, meekly replied, “that he hoped he would always speak of it with becoming humility, and with an abiding consciousness that all he had received he owed to divine grace ; but that both truth and gratitude required him to acknowledge that he very distinctly and manifestly obtained the blessing, after seeking it earnestly about three weeks, near forty-five years ago ; and though with the Bishop he had to acknowledge that the evidence of his continuance in this grace had not always been fully satisfactory, he never doubted having received it ; and for about twenty years past he had almost invariably enjoyed an evidence that he had been made ‘free from sin,’ and was wholly the Lord’s.”

Our hearts were growing warm with this holy converse, when the Bishop suddenly turned to Father Cole and inquired, “ But, Brother Cole, suppose you were to die to-night, where do you think your soul would go to ? This is the way to come right to the point.” This ques-

tion turned loose the pent-up joy of the venerable man's heart, and he exclaimed, "Glory to God ! though I feel that I am a poor, unworthy sinner, saved by grace alone, yet I feel an assurance, should I even die to-night, that through that grace I would go straight home to my long-desired, long-sought, long-loved home in heaven ! Glory be to God on high ! Hallelujah ! I have sweet hopes of heaven in my soul even now!" A spirit of heaven-born joy filled our hearts, which was variously manifested by falling tears, shaking hands and embracing each other ere we parted for the night. Thus this holy day, in holy duties and divine comforts, passed away !

"How sweet a Sabbath thus to spend,  
In hope of one that ne'er shall end."

## CHAPTER XI.

Pleasing Reports from the Sabbath Congregations—Roman Catholic and Protestant Episcopal Churches Thinly Attended—Interesting Conversation with Judge and Mrs. Hornbeck—They Look with a Practical Eye at Stubborn Facts—The-opening of Conference—Reports from the Churches—Reports of Committees—Pleasing Examination of the Character of most of the Elders—A few Knotty Cases—Simon Shurkey—Abner Crookall—Lyman Hardy Talks too much About Money—Session Prolonged to Re-admit Marion Stoner and Silas Goodall—Discussion About Re-admitting Them, with the Understanding that they were to be Accommodated—Items Looking to an Early Adjournment.

When we met at the Conference room on Monday morning most of the ministers seemed unusually cheerful and happy. Several who had filled distant appointments in the country the day before were interesting the groups around them with their various adventures since they left on Saturday afternoon, and the success which had attended their ministrations on the Sabbath. Others were inquiring about the city churches ; the size of the congregations ; what subjects the preachers discoursed on ; what apparent impressions were made, etc. The congregations in all the churches supplied with ministers from our Conference were represented as unusually large, especially in the Presbyterian church, where it was known that Dr. Callou was to preach. The brethren were all too courteous to take any advantage of our sister Churches who had kindly offered us the use of their pulpits, by introducing anything sectarian in their sermons. They were satisfied in preaching a pure Gospel, without controverting the established creeds of any Church ; the consequence of which was, almost every body was highly pleased with the discourses ; so that while this brotherly course was truly creditable to our common Christianity, it was no disad-

vantage to our denomination. Several who had not usually attended our ministry were heard to say, "if the Methodist ministers generally preached in that way, they would avail themselves of every opportunity to hear them, when they could do so without neglecting their own ministry." How much better it is to draw people to us in this way than it is to disgust and drive them away from us by rude attacks on their sectional doctrines, and bitter side cuts at their Church peculiarities? We got no report from the Roman Catholic Church, except that by a sort of common consent it had been delivered over to such of the foreign population as were Catholics, and to the French negroes, most of whom attended that Church. We incidentally got a report from the Protestant Episcopal Church not very creditable to their exclusiveness and high claims to apostolic succession. Judge Hornbeck and his lady, with whom several of our ministers boarded during the Conference, are members of the Episcopal Church, and are, by all, acknowledged to be spiritual Christians, in addition to their superior intelligence and refinement. They seemed unusually reserved during the dinner hour on Sunday, as though something unpleasant was preying on their minds, as we were informed by Brother Iverson, who related the following colloquy to us. The ministers who boarded with them surmised what was the matter, but were careful not to say a word that might add an additional wound to their feelings. They simply expressed a wish to have the pleasure of their company to our Church in the afternoon; to which Mrs. Hornbeck quickly responded by saying that they were going, as they had no service in their church at that hour.

"And if we had," said Judge Hornbeck, "we would go to the Methodist Church, for I wish not only to hear one of your warm, extemporaneous sermons, but also to witness the ordination of your Elders. I see your ritual is about the same as that of the Protestant Episcopal Church."

"Yes, Judge," replied Brother Iverson, "or else that of the Protestant Episcopal Church is about the same as that of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Our Church, I believe, is a little the oldest, and having the ritual in use before your Church was organized, we only claim a sort of pre-emption right to it. But the truth is we both got our rituals from our old English Episcopal Church, from which we have descended—yours through Episcopal ordination, and ours through Presbyterian ordination, both of which, you know, was formerly recognized as valid by many of our best and most learned Episcopal Bishops and clergy."

"That's all true, Mr. Iverson," replied the Judge, "so that we will have no controversy about these disputed points now. I mean disputed by others—not by us. Come, the bell rings, and if we do not go early we may miss getting a convenient seat for seeing, as well as hearing. You Methodist are the greatest folks to jam a Church full of people that we have in the land."

"I do not wonder at it, husband," remarked Mrs. Hornbeck; "if our Church would follow their example in some things it would be greatly to our advantage."

"At the supper table," continued Brother Iverson, "our host and hostess seemed more cheerful, and spoke in glowing terms of Brother Hartford's sermon on Holi-

ness, and of the graceful manner and solemn dignity with which the Elders were ordained."

"I wish," said Mrs. Hornbeck, "we had exercised our better judgment and gone to your Church this morning. Everybody is talking about the overwhelming congregation and fine sermon you had there, while at our Church we had not twenty, all told; and I thought Dr. Huntington was unusually dull and uninteresting through the whole service. He was certainly suffering in body or mind, for I never saw him look more depressed. I noticed he changed his manuscript just before he commenced preaching; and instead of a new sermon, repeated one that he preached to us not six months ago. I suppose he saw the congregation was not there for whom he had prepared his sermon, and he concluded to reserve it until he should meet them in future."

"I reckon we did right in going to our Church this morning," interposed Judge Hornbeck; "our minister was evidently much mortified at his exceedingly small audience, and if we had been absent it would have added to the keenness of his wounded feelings. It is not altogether his fault that we are so unpleasantly situated. I am truly sorry that we have any rule in our Church to exclude the ministers of other respectable Churches from our pulpits, especially the Methodist ministers, for their doctrines are one with ours. People, enlightened as our countrymen generally are, will read and think for themselves, especially about matters which concern their Church relations and the safety and final salvation of their souls. And the result of their reading and thinking is, that about nineteen-twentieths

of them learn to look on our exclusiveness and high Church claims as religious bigotry, and turn away from us with disgust. Our course is suicidal to ourselves. Our Church had as fair a start on this continent as any other, and yet it is now, at this late date, one of the smallest regular Protestant denominations in the land. The Methodists outnumber us in the same territory about as eight to one. It is true we now and then receive both ministers and members from other churches, about which a great deal is said; but they are generally disaffected ministers and laymen, who, though they add some to our numbers and wealth, add but little to our spirituality and moral power in accomplishing the great purposes of the Gospel. I am an Episcopalian. I love our orthodox doctrines and soul-inspiring liturgy, but I am not blind to our impolitic course, which throws the masses off from us."

"Yes! we had demonstrative evidences of that this morning," interposed Mrs. Hornbeck. "The Presbyterian and Baptist Churches, I understand, were literally jammed full of people; and if we had asked the Conference to send us one of their choice ministers, our Church might have been filled, too. There were enough standing outside the other Churches, or that returned home for the want of room, to have filled our Church. I am truly sorry that our spiritual rulers are so slow in learning a little common sense, for I am not willing to charge all this to religious bigotry. Our Diocesan Bishop, at almost every visitation, takes pains to bring it in somewhere in his sermons, that John and Charles Wesley, the founders of Methodism, were Episcopalians, and that they both lived and died in communion with the

Episcopal Church. I wish that he and our clergy generally would turn out and preach and labor for the salvation of souls as the Wesleys did. Then we would begin to advance as other Churches do, instead of dragging along as we have usually done. If they would ‘preach the Gospel in demonstration of the spirit and power,’ instead of preaching the Church ! the Church !! on all popular occasions, it would be greatly to our advantage.”

Just as Brother Iverson concluded the substance of the evening colloquy at Judge Hornbeck’s, and Gray Lester had time to remark playfully that “the testimony of the Judge and his lady was unimpeachable,” the Bishop’s gavel called the Conference to order.

After the religious services were over, and the minutes of Saturday read and approved, the committee on public worship asked leave to announce the preachers for the morning and evening appointments.

The Bishop took occasion to inquire of the chairman “what reports he had received from the ministers in reference to the success of their labors, both in the city and country, the day before?”

He replied “that the congregations were unusually large, attentive and feeling; that at several churches where revivals had lately been in progress there were several additional bright conversions; and at one place five prominent citizens had joined the Church, and at another there was an addition of thirteen; also, that the work of grace was pleasingly manifested in our colored congregations.”

“God be praised for these additional evidences of his favorable presence among us!” was feelingly uttered

by the Bishop, to which there was a hearty response by most of the Conference.

We had reports from most of the standing and select committees this morning, embracing our Sabbath-school, educational, missionary, and various other Church interests, some of which were adopted without debate, while the debatable cases were laid over for future consideration, that we might proceed at once to the examination of the character of Elders. We had on our list about seventy-five traveling Elders, and though the examination was sufficiently scrutinizing, we got through with all but two or three cases by a little after twelve o'clock. No body of Christian ministers undergoes such a strict and honest examination into their Christian and ministerial character annually as the Methodist itinerants do; and it is cause of devout thanksgiving to God that such a large proportion of them are preserved blameless from year to year. They are represented by the people they serve in the Gospel, through their Presiding Elders, and any other of their co-laborers who may have knowledge of them; while the Presiding Elders in turn are represented by the preachers on their several districts, who reflect the views of the official and lay members over whom they preside. In these annual examinations into the ministerial consistency and fidelity of our preachers we endeavor to suppress everything like backbiting on the one hand, or flattery on the other. Whatever complaint is alleged against a brother must be made in his presence, that he may have an opportunity to vindicate himself, if he is innocent, or to be admonished, if he is blameworthy; and whatever is said by way of commen-

dation, must be said after he retires. In regard to most of the Elders, as soon as their names were called and the question asked, "Is there anything against him?" there was a response from half a dozen voices, "Nothing against him, sir;" and when on their retirement the question was asked, "What have you to say in his favor?" a very common answer was, "He is the same good and faithful man he has heretofore been." It was indeed delightful to see these holy men, some in the vigor of early manhood and others in the autumn of life, pass out and in so rapidly during the examination of their characters. The Bishop, especially, looked pleased and happy. He said "he anticipated no trouble in stationing these able and faithful ministers of the New Testament, except where three or four different charges were earnestly petitioning for the same man."

But every sweet has its bitter—every rose its thorn. I may as well say that the inharmonious word "knotty" has a technical meaning in our Annual Conferences and Bishop's Councils; and the great cordiality and happiness of this day had to be marred by a few "knotty" cases. Thanks be to God that they were so few—only three out of about seventy-five Elders. The first was the case of Simon Shurkey, who had been traviling—or rather pretending to travel—about eight or ten years. His mind seemed to be of high order, his talents as a preacher good, and by fits and starts he was a good worker, and yet it seemed impossible to make a consistent itinerant preacher of him. He made some unpleasant work, and got into difficulties wherever he went. He was egotistic, loquacious, fault-finding, dogmatical and arbitrary. And when the people com-

plained about his unministerial ways, he would say they were his enemies, and were persecuting him. He would continue to neglect half of his appointments, and for two or three years he scarcely went one regular round on his circuit. A quaint but sensible old brother remarked that "he was like an old rusty, cross-cut-saw, with from one to three or four teeth out in a place, so that while it scratches some with the few remaining teeth, it does but little in the way of getting through the timber." Brother Shurkey was almost certain to get to the seat of the Conference in an ill humor, and soon found many things to complain of. "Justice had not been done him in his last appointment; he had, by some neglect of his Presiding Elder, or some successful scheming of his enemies, been placed on a hard circuit, where they paid him almost nothing; he did not know why he could not fare as well, at least, as his equals in the Conference," etc. Next he would complain about "the place assigned him to board during the Conference; it was wanting in suitable accommodations; it was too inconvenient to the Church and Conference room; it was a contrivance of the preacher in charge to keep him in the shade as much as possible." Then in a day or two his countenance would clear up, and he would get full of the itinerant fire; there would be a dozen circuits in his reach, either one of which he was willing to travel. Sundry exhortations were forced upon the preachers in private circles to be ready to go anywhere, and for a few days he would be one of the most conspicuous preachers on the streets. Toward the close of Conference his moody feelings would return, and he would be in great apparent trouble about his appointment. The

Bishop's Council, he feared, were not fixing up things in the right way; he knew that some of the Presiding Elders had been listening to his enemies, and he feared justice would not be done to him in his appointment. "Just as I expected," he exclaimed at our last Conference, as soon as his appointment was announced; "the very place I ought not to have been sent to." My enemies are there ahead of me; and then I shall have to fight the Baptists and Campbellites all the year. I've a great mind just to go home and give it up." At every Conference there came up a list of complaints from the Quarterly Conference, through the Presiding Elder, against Brother Shurkey. The complaint at this Conference was almost total neglect of his circuit; but he was fruitful in his excuses and palliatives for his delinquencies. He said, "if the brethren only knew as well as I do what I had to wade through, they would not be so rife in their complaints against me. Three times, when on my way to the lower appointments, I thought I was going to be very sick, and concluded it would be safest to return home. Several times I had a sort of foreboding that there would be sickness in my family, which, indeed, to some extent, was realized. On another occasion, having to ride near thirty miles on a Sabbath afternoon, after filling my appointment, in order to get home to meet a man on business early Monday morning, I hurt my horse's back so bad I had to miss a whole round on my circuit before he was in a ridable condition again. But what interferes with me more than all the rest is, that the people pay me so little for preaching that I sometimes have to stay at home and attend to my secular affairs in order to be an honest

man in the payment of my debts. I think, however, if the Stewards of Conference will allow me my pro rata claim on the Conference fund, that I will be able to satisfy the claims of my creditors, so that I can take work untrammeled for the next year. I love the itinerancy; my heart is in the work, and I can not think of locating." And just here he succeeded in giving vent to a flood of tears, and sat down quite overcome.

The Bishop asked him "if he had anything further to say in explanation of his case?" To which he replied, "Nothing, sir; my feelings will not allow me to proceed; I feel safe in leaving my case in the hands of my brethren, where I have always left it;" and then he retired.

Nothing so arouses the sympathies of a large number of an Annual Conference as to see one of their number suffused with tears while he is giving utterance to his professions of undying love for the itinerancy; and this last effort of Brother Shurkey to extenuate his oft-repeated delinquencies was not without its effect; especially among the younger members of the body. It was difficult to determine why Simon Shurkey persisted in pretending to be a traveling preacher. Some said it must be for the sake of the three or four hundred dollars he got annually by adding his quarterage and Conference dividends together. Others thought that could hardly be the case, as he had a handsome little estate, and could make more than that by staying at home and attending to his secular affairs. Some thought it was merely to gratify what seemed to be the predominant impulse of his nature—a desire to be a sort of 'bell wether,' and his apparent egotism certainly furnished grounds for

such a suspicion. Nothing seemed to please him better than to be in the lead, and having others acting in obedience to his dictation. But others, with more probability of being right, attributed his persistence in the itinerancy to the estimate he placed on the position it gave him in society to be connected with such an honorable body of men. Be all this as it may, he certainly struggled to retain what he called his rights as a member of the Conference with a pertinacity not easily overcome. But let us return to his case as it now passed in review before the Conference. In view of his apparent tender-heartedness and professions of love for the work, several were in favor of passing his character, and giving him another year to retrieve his lost reputation.

Robert Cole said "that would not do. It would be practicing a gross fraud on any circuit to send such an untrustworthy man to it. He thought eight years was long enough to be deceived and disappointed with any man. His friends ought to persuade him to locate."

Jesse Dines said "that Brother Shurkey had told him that he had a constant dull pain at times in his heart, just below the tie of his cravat, and he feared he was going to have bronchitis some day, and asked if he could not be placed on the superannuated list?"

"What!" inquired Randall Cardin, "put a man in the vigor of manhood on the superannuated list, who has never yet done a faithful day's work in the itinerancy! We will not have that honored list disparaged by putting any such sinecures on it. No man ought to think of such honorable accommodations under at least a dozen years of hard and faithful work in the pastoral office."

Abram Crusty offered a resolution to locate him, on the ground of general unacceptability as a traveling preacher. Several were in favor of the motion to locate him without his consent, until Brother Reedum reminded the Conference that Brother Shurkey had not been notified in due time of any such intention; and if the motion to locate prevailed, he would doubtless appeal to the General Conference, on the ground that he was not notified in time of any contemplated move to locate him against his will, to give him an opportunity to collect testimony and prepare for his defense, in which case the General Conference would, in all probability, restore him."

The Bishop favored the views of Brother Reedum, and said "it would be better to bear the burden a year longer than to do an illegal act. Our unalterable rule secures to every minister and member of the Church under impeachment a fair trial, which always implies giving the accused due and timely notice of the precise complaint or charge, including every specification, that he may have sufficient time to collect his testimony and prepare for his defense."

After considerable discussion, his character passed by a lean majority, including most of the young men of the body; whereupon the Bishop playfully remarked, "that the Presiding Elders would hear of Brother Shurkey again before the close of Conference, and they had as well think in time about where they could appoint him for the next year."

The next case of difficulty that came up was that of Abner Crookall. He had been twelve or fifteen years in the Conference, and seemed to be a good man, and a

faithful and regular worker, yet it was evident that he was greatly under par as a minister, and seldom stayed over one year in the same charge. What could be the matter? was often asked by those not well acquainted with his circumstances.

Brother Ransom, who represented Abner Crookall's case, said "it had become his painful duty to make a statement of some facts which had accumulated in his case that had greatly interfered with his usefulness, and made it next to impossible to get a suitable work for him."

"Have you informed him of your purpose to make known the facts to the Conference?" inquired the Bishop.

Brother Ransom readily replied, "I have conversed with him freely about all the matters alluded to, and the difficulties with which they had surrounded him; and more than two months ago I informed him that a sense of duty would compel me to lay all these matters before this Conference."

"Then proceed to give them to the Conference," said the Bishop.

"Well, sir," continued Brother Ransom, "his difficulties have grown out of his pecuniary embarrassments; and they in their turn have originated in his want of economy and his misapplication of money put into his hands, united with the high notions and extravagancies of his family. He had a very small family when he entered the Conference, and was not in debt, and with his talents and the liberal salaries and presents in money and other supplies which he has received, it is evident that he ought to have kept out of debt and saved some-

thing for future exigencies. But instead of this he has left debts unpaid in nearly all the circuits he has traveled. Some are due to brethren on account of borrowed money, some for corn and other supplies bought on credit, some to dry goods merchants and grocers not of our Church, who take occasion often to complain about how badly they have been treated by a Methodist preacher. For the honor of the Church, and to save the credit of the ministry, liberal brethren have several times united to try and get him out of debt and set him afloat again, but their liberality has been poorly compensated. Instead of economizing more closely and paying up arrears, he has left them unpaid and laid out these liberal donations in extra supplies for his table, or costly apparel for himself and family. The people are not without their well-grounded complaints against his manifest extravagance. When he gets a little money it seems he can not rest until he lays it out for something new; or he must take his family off on a long and expensive visit somewhere. I was so teased by the merchants at the Cross Roads about his indebtedness to them that I proposed to some of our wealthy brethren at the camp-meeting to raise the sum of three hundred dollars by private donations and pay them up, in order to relieve his character there; but one brother remarked 'that we might just as well undertake to stop a gully by turning a stream of water into it, as to relieve Abner Crookall of debt by assuming his past liabilities; that had been tried to no good purpose.' Another remarked that he had become such an adept at begging himself that it would hardly be fair to set others on the people in his behalf; that on all occasions, in season and out of

season, with an imploring countenance and a sort of funeral tone, he was in the habit of referring to his embarrassed condition, and, either directly or indirectly, asking something in the way of a donation or loan. The stewards complain that he is a perfect bore to them, and they never wish him returned a second year. Others spoke in a similar strain; so I gave up the case at the Cross Roads, and concluded I would lay the whole matter before the Conference. And here permit me to say, Mr. President, that you will find great difficulty in getting a suitable work for Brother Crookall. He says he must have a work that will pay a large salary, and will take either a circuit, station or district; but he prefers a district, as that would give him a wider range among our wealthy brethren, who, on application, might be induced to assist him in managing his pecuniary embarrassments."

Brother Crookall now arose and asked leave to make a few remarks to the Conference in his own behalf. He said "he had been trying to serve the Church a long time, and had made many and great sacrifices in order to do it. All this he had done from a sense of duty, but somehow the people did not appreciate his toils and sacrifices in their behalf. They had let him fall behind in money matters from year to year, until now he owed more than a thousand dollars beyond his means to pay. He thought, however, if the managers would give him a liberal donation from the Preachers' Aid Society, that he would be able to continue in the work—a consummation greatly desired on his part, as he had no other way at present of supporting his family. His wife and children were very dear to his heart, and he hoped the

brethren would deal tenderly and liberally with him on their account."

After he retired the Bishop remarked: "I have heard the brethren talking about 'knotty cases,' and I presume this is one of them. Here you say you have a good man and a good preacher, but he lives free, and dresses his family and himself equal to his wealthy neighbors, but does not pay his honest debts. This looks paradoxical, brethren. But you must dispose of his case; so go at it and do the best you can."

"Mr. President," said Brother Burgess, "this brother's case has been one of increasing perplexity to our Conference for years. It is true I still think him a good man, and in some places he has been useful, especially at protracted meetings; but it is afflicting to hear, everywhere he has spent a year, that he does not pay his debts. Is there no way that we can be relieved from the reproach that his course brings upon us all? How can we enforce the apostolic precept, that we should 'owe no man anything but love' with such a case always uppermost in the minds of the people? We have hoped for a favorable change until hope has fled."

"Yes, Mr. President," answered Brother Hartford to the question of Brother Burgess, "there is a way in which we may relieve ourselves from this difficult case, if we will avail ourselves of it. We have a law in our Discipline made expressly for cases of this sort; and if we had brought it to bear on Brother Crookall's case years ago it would have been better for all parties concerned. But instead of doing that, we have passed his character from year to year with only slight complaints, and by thus endorsing him we have given him position

as a minister, and thereby increased his opportunities for going in debt. But few men in business will refuse to credit a Methodist minister for small amounts, because they so generally pay up promptly; and this very fact, in connection with our annual endorsement of his character, enables him to get credit in every circuit where he has not heretofore traveled. It is due to ourselves to enforce the law of the Church in his case, and it may be of great service to him also. I refer to our general Rule, which makes it a penal offense to 'take up goods without a probability of paying for them,' and to our other special statutes in relation to 'insolvent debtors, non-payment of debts,' etc.; and I now move that a suitable committee of three be appointed to investigate the causes of Brother Crookall's indebtedness, with such light as they can obtain from himself and others, and report at the opening of the session to-morrow morning." The committee was appointed, with instructions to report accordingly.

We had another case, of an opposite character, that detained the Conference for half an hour. Lyman Hardy had entered the ministry very poor, had traveled several poor circuits, and had, at the end of his fifth year in the ministry, married a wife poor in worldly substance, but every way suited to be the wife of an itinerant preacher. Their united poverty combined to make them use all lawful means to make money, as well as to be very saving of their dime. Their economy was rigid almost to a fault, and while no one disputed their honesty, it was generally admitted that they were both good collectors, and seldom failed to get their disciplinary allowance on every circuit he

traveled after their marriage. Brother Hardy always had a good text to preach a collecting sermon on, for he was attentive to all his appointments and pastoral duties, so that he felt that he had a claim on the people for services rendered, and he was not backward in enforcing it. There was no getting clear of him, especially about the close of the Conference year, until his salary was fully paid up. In addition to this, he sold a large number of our Church publications, and took good care to have them all paid for; and his per centage was carefully counted and added to the family fund. He was also active in extending the circulation of our Church periodicals, and always claimed his perquisites as agent. His promptness in claiming, and exactness in collecting, all that was due him, with a habit of talking on all occasions about his pecuniary matters, led many to believe that he was really a lover of money. When his name was called Brother Crusty said:

“Mr. President, there are serious complaints against Brother Hardy, on account of his worldly-mindedness, and money-getting, and money-saving propensities; and they ought to be looked into by the Conference.”

Brother Ransom, his Presiding Elder, vindicated him, by affirming “that he attended faithfully to all his ministerial and pastoral duties, paid all his debts promptly, was as liberal to the institutions of the Church as any man of his ability, and that his only fault was that of talking too much about his financial interests, which seemed to indicate that his heart was too much inclined that way.”

“I have no objection, Mr. President,” said Rand Cardin, “to Brother Hardy’s habits of making mon

honestly, and saving it carefully—he may need it all in the education of his children and in times of old age—but I object seriously to his talking so much about money matters. A minister's conversation, especially, should be 'without covetousness.'"

"I think I now see," said the Bishop, "where lies all the difficulty in this case: it is in the foolish and undignified way that Brother Hardy has, perhaps imperceptibly, fallen into of talking too much about his little money matters among all sorts of people. If he is only teachable—as I presume he is—it will only be necessary for his Presiding Elder to admonish him to confine his conversation about his pecuniary affairs to such only as he transacts his monetary business with, and then to use as few words as will answer the purpose. It certainly can not be wrong for a minister to avail himself of all honorable means to acquire and save enough money and other property to make himself and family comfortable, provided he does not neglect any of the duties of his holy calling, but he should keep his private financial matters to himself."

His character now passed, with the understanding that his Presiding Elder should admonish him on the point of complaint.

It being near the time of adjournment, Brother Burgess moved to prolong the session to permit Brother Lester to present the certificates of location of Marion Stoner and Silas Goodall, and apply for their re-admission into the traveling connection; which motion prevailed.

Brother Lester then presented their certificates of location, one at a time, and also a recommendation

from their Quarterly Conferences for their re-admission. He stated to the Conference that they were valuable ministers, as most of us knew, and had been compelled to locate because their families were permanently settled in the Pineville District, and because the circuits as then arranged were too large, and too remote from their homes to justify their continuance in the itinerancy; but since the division and re-adjustment of several circuits in that District there would be ample room for them to labor in the regular pastoral work to the end of life, without any violation of the law of limitation.

"I suppose, then, Mr. President," said Daniel Davis, one of the younger members, "that these brethren are not willing to be sent anywhere, but wish to be re-admitted with the understanding that they are to be accommodated with circuits near their homes. This does not look like doing justice to those of us who are expected to go to any place in the Conference where it may be your will and pleasure to appoint us."

"It will not be your 'will and pleasure,' Mr. President," replied Brother Lester, "to send Brother Davis or any one else to any place that would imply the temporal ruin of their families, or the separation of those 'whom God hath joined together.' Whenever his previous labors and providential circumstances will justify and require his being accommodated with an appointment sufficiently near his home to enable him to discharge the duties of a husband, father and master, according to the requirements of the Holy Scriptures, in connection with his pastoral duties, he will doubtless receive such accommodation as many worthy brother

before him have. Of course these two holy and faithful ministers—if re-admitted, as doubtless they will be—expect to be accommodated with circuits sufficiently near their home for them to protect and provide for their families as Christian men are plainly and positively required to do; and in this they only expect what has always been conceded to ministers similarly situated. Their services as pastors are greatly needed in portions of the Pineville District convenient to the location of their families, and, I am assured, will be highly appreciated by the people."

After these remarks, they were, one at a time, re-admitted by a large majority of votes, only a few ultra itinerants voting against their reception; and mature experience and practical observation will teach them, in less than a dozen years, to vote differently in such cases.

The Bishop now requested all the committees to be ready to make their final reports to-morrow. He also informed the Conference "that they would be entitled to at least five, and perhaps six, Delegates to the ensuing General Conference, and it might be well to say that the election will take place to-morrow, toward the close of the session, that all the preachers may be present to vote."

After a little consultation, this was agreed upon. The Conference then adjourned.

## CHAPTER XII.

Bishop's Council Meets—Report of the Committee on the Readjustment of the Districts Presented, Read, Discussed and Adopted—Brothers Cole and Walker in the Council—Changing the Name of a District and Naming a New One—Appointing Presiding Elders—Their Necessary Qualifications—Discussion on the Election of Delegates to the General Conference—Knotty Cases—Jacob Dodgey—Orrin Mandoll—Simon Shurkey—Abner Crookall.

The Council met at 3 o'clock Monday afternoon, pursuant to adjournment. The committee, consisting of Brothers Ransom, Hartford and Cardin, of the Council, and Brothers Cole and Walker, of the Conference, who were appointed at the evening session of the first meeting of the Council to revise the Districts and to form a new District, were ready with their report, and it was forthwith taken up and ordered to be read. After prayerful deliberation, the report had been neatly drawn up by Brother Ransom and concurred in by the other members of the committee. In readjusting the districts they had been planned with geographical neatness, giving to each one a fair proportion of the densely-populated and wealthy portions of the Conference, with a suitable share of the sparsely-settled and poorer circuits. They were also laid off so as to equalize the traveling and labors of the Presiding Elders as much as possible. Most of the Presiding Elders were well pleased with the proposed new arrangement of the districts ; but Brothers Reedum and Hartford still objected to any change in theirs.

“Bishop,” said Brother Reedum, “I earnestly desire that there may be no change in the Cherryville District until my term of service expires by limitation. I dread the long rides I will have to take to those two large

piney woods circuits the committee proposes to give me in exchange for those two compact and convenient circuits they propose to take from me and attach to the Sandy Hill District. In addition to the long rides, I will have to stay away from my family over two, and sometimes three, Sabbaths ; and that is what I am not used to, and do not like."

Brother Hartford made similar objections to the changes recommended in the Rich Valley District ; but said "he yielded to the majority ; and, in truth, he began to feel that the proposed changes were not only reasonable, but also equitable. They were all engaged in the same glorious work of saving souls and spreading Scriptural holiness, and, as far as possible, should share equally the responsibilities and toils of the ministry."

In the meantime the Bishop, assisted by the Secretary of the Council, had carefully looked over the readjusted plan of the districts, in connection with his pocket map of the Conference Territory, and gave it as his opinion that the plan was as near perfect as it could well be made. He was very much pleased with its apparent symmetry and its approximation to equality of labor and support among the Presiding Elders.

"Mr. President," said Brother Reedum, "I have often thought that it was doing great violence to my natural proclivities to make me an itinerant preacher. My feelings and attachments are naturally local ; hence it is always a great trial to me to give up old friends, and have to substitute new acquaintances in their place ; and this, I believe, after all, constitutes my greatest difficulty in submitting to the proposed change in the Districts ; but, after looking somewhat in detail at the

new plan, in connection with your map, I begin to see its beauty and propriety ; and as the proposed changes will give permanency to the shape of the Districts hereafter, I waive all my objections, and concur in the report of the committee."

" Mr. President," said Brother Cole, " Brother Walker and myself being well acquainted with the whole of our Conference territory, the other members of the committee consulted us on almost every proposed change, and perhaps deferred too much to our judgment ; but, having no local attachments or private interests to bias our judgment, we endeavored to exercise it for the present and future good of the whole Conference ; and we rejoice to see our views so fully concurred in by the Council. Having discharged our obligations as members of the committee, we will now retire and leave you undisturbed in your deliberations."

" No, Brother Cole," quickly responded the Bishop, " you and Brother Walker need not retire, for I assure you your presence and counsel will be very acceptable to us to the end of our session. I flatter myself that we will get through early with all that we can well do this afternoon; so that I hope to have an hour for social intercourse."

" What say you, Brother Walker," inquired Brother Cole of his colleague, " shall we accept the Bishop's invitation, and remain in the Council ? "

" By all means, Brother Cole," responded Brother Walker ; " we will feel quite at home around the Council table ; we were accustomed to its responsibilities. pains and pleasures long before most of these brethren present were ministers at all. Often have we sat in

Council with Bishops McKendree, George, Roberts, and Hedding. I esteemed them all highly, and reverenced them as the holiest and most useful of Christian ministers; but Bishop Roberts was my beau ideal of all that constitutes the best of Bishops. But, Brother Cole, we must be on our best behavior here this afternoon, and not indulge the propensity of old men for talking too much."

"A good suggestion, Brother Walker, responded the Bishop," until we get through with what we now have on hand. Then we hope to have the pleasure of hearing you both at full length. What say you all, brethren, to adopting the proposed new adjustment of the Districts?"

"I move, Mr. President," said Brother Reedum, "that we unanimously adopt it, without further debate. These five brethren have been at work at it for several days, and I have no doubt it is the best we can do for the present."

Brother Reedum's motion prevailed, and the new plan was adopted, with the understanding that it was to be as permanent hereafter as the nature of the work will admit.

"Mr. President," said Brother Ransom, "Brother Hartford promised, early in the session of the Council, to suggest a more appropriate name for Middle River District, and this is the proper time, I think, for him to do it."

"As Brother Ransom, Mr. President," replied Brother Hartford, "has been thoroughly converted to our theory of giving all our charges, as far as possible, geograph-

ical names, I prefer to have him suggest a name for the district he represents."

"That will be more appropriate," said the Bishop, "so let Brother Ransom give it a suitable name."

Brother Ransom replied, "I suggest the name of Bellemont—our principal town station, and withal a county and post town. It is central to the district, and has all the advantages of a geographical name."

"A very appropriate name, Bishop," said Brother Hartford.

"Then let it be so entered on the minutes," the Bishop replied.

"One thing more, brethren," continued the Bishop, "and this part of our work will be complete. You have a new district to name; what will you call it? You are all equally at liberty to suggest a name."

"I move, Mr. President," said Brother Reedum, "that our venerable Brother Walker, who sits with us this afternoon by special invitation, and whose home is in the new district, be requested to give it a name."

The motion prevailed unanimously, and after a few moments' reflection Brother Walker suggested the name of Mount Hermon, which is an important and growing town, central to the District, and bids fair to be the emporium of Methodism in that region. The suggestion was unanimously approved, and the name adopted.

"Well! well!" said Brother Walker, "I little thought I would ever have the privilege of naming another district. I have named several in years long gone by. I thank you, brethren, for the compliment."

"The next thing in course, brethren," said the Bishop, "is to appoint the Presiding Elders for the ensuing year

on the eight districts of which the Conference is now composed. As six of the incumbents of the past year are eligible for reappointment, and as I have heard no complaints either against their Christian character or administration, I expect to reappoint them for another year, unless some reasons, now unknown to me, should be revealed why they should not be continued."

"There is one subject, Bishop," said Brother Reedum, "which it may be well for us to discuss to a reasonable extent before the Presiding Elders are appointed. I refer to the question, 'whether we should observe, in these appointments, what politicians and civilians call rotation in office?' Some few of our preachers are clamorous for rotation in the higher offices of the Church, especially that of Presiding Elder."

"I do not think, Brother Reedum," replied the Bishop, "that it is necessary to discuss that question much. Where brethren in Elder's orders are equally qualified in all essential prerequisites to fill these higher offices in the Church acceptably and usefully, I have no objection to something like rotation in office; but where there are so many of the same grade in the ministry, it would not only be an utter impossibility to observe anything like rotation in filling these offices, but an attempt to do it would work the most disastrous consequences to the Church. Comparatively few men are born to rule. Many ministers succeed admirably as pastors of circuits, stations and missions who have not the requisite qualifications to preside over a district containing twelve or fifteen traveling preachers, thirty or more local preachers, a greater number of other officials, with several thousand Church members. Such a work requires a man

not only physically, intellectually and morally qualified, but also possessing extraordinary administrative talents. But as I gave you my views fully on this subject last Friday evening, I need not repeat them now. The main object is to get men worthy and well qualified to fill this responsible and important office. And when we find a minister properly qualified in all essentials to discharge acceptably and usefully the duties of this office, the longer we can keep him in it the better it is for all concerned. The results of experience will be of great service to him in all after life if he be indeed the man for the office. If we should, through mistake, put an Elder in this office whose tastes, habits and talents are found, after fair trial, to be unsuitable—or if a man who has once succeeded well, should, through indolence or imprudence, cease to do well, it will certainly be an imperious duty to supersede him as soon as possible by a man every way more competent to fill the office. But this is not rotation in office; it is simply dispensing with a man not qualified to fill the office, in order to put one in who is. If what you call rotation in office be just and necessary in the Presiding Eldership, why not apply the same rule to the Episcopacy and give your Bishops a respite, now and then, from the onerous and responsible duties of their office? But enough has been said on this point. Each Presiding Elder, as his name is called, will please retire until the other members of the Council confer on the propriety of re-appointing him."

After consultation, Zedekiah Reedum, Josephus Hartford and George Howe were re-appointed to their former districts.

The name of William Ransom being called, he re-

minded the Council "that his term on the Middle River District had expired by limitation, and that he wished to be excused from the wearing labors of a district, if, in their judgment, it could be done consistently with the interests of the Church."

As soon as he retired, the other members of the Council unanimously expressed the opinion that he ought not to be excused from serving on a District, but that, in view of his feebleness, his labors ought to be abated.

"Bishop," said Brother Walker, "as you have kindly permitted me to be present this afternoon as a spectator, may I be permitted to make a suggestion in this case?"

"Certainly, Brother Walker," replied the Bishop, "we will be glad to have the opinion of yourself and Brother Cole on any matter that may come up while we have the pleasure of your company."

"Thank you," said Brother Walker; "and as you permitted me to suggest a name for the new District, because I live within its bounds, I ask leave to suggest that you give us William Ransom for our Presiding Elder. His family residence is in the District, and the District being the smallest in the Conference, I think Brother Ransom can preside over it without material detriment to his health. As he is well adapted, both by nature and grace, for the office, in addition to his long experience, I think it would be wrong to deprive the District of his valuable services, simply to test the qualifications of an untried man."

The Council all concurred in the suggestion of Brother

Walker, and Brother Ransom was appointed Presiding Elder on Mount Hermon District.

"Now is the proper time, brethren," said the Bishop, "to appoint Brother Ransom's successor on what has hitherto been called Middle River District, but is hereafter to be known by the name of Bellemont. I have endeavored to weigh the matter carefully and prayerfully in connection with the four brethren you recommended last Friday evening, and they each seem so well qualified that I would not hesitate to appoint them all if we needed their services in that capacity; but as we need but one at present, I have selected Henry Newbern, and now request your united advice as to the propriety of appointing him in charge of the District."

"I think the selection a good one, Mr. President," said Brother Reedum; "his antecedents are all good. I would be willing to trust him in this, or any other position in the ministry."

"I think we all concur in the views of Brother Reedum, Mr. President," said Brother Lester.

"This being the case," said the Bishop, "we will put Henry Newbern down as Presiding Elder on the Bellemont District."

The names of Randall Cardin, Jackson Innis and Gray Lester were now called consecutively, and, after consultation in their absence, each one was returned to his former District.

"This completes our afternoon task, brethren, at an early hour," said the Bishop; "and now, if we can find something profitable to talk about, we may spend at least three-quarters of an hour together in social intercourse before the supper bell rings. The Council wil

please meet again for a short time after supper, to determine what disposition is to be made of a few difficult cases yet remaining on the unstationed list."

We soon relaxed into a free conversation about the pending election of delegates to our ensuing General Conference ; our venerable superanuates, Brothers Cole and Walker, taking the lead by common consent. The Bishop seemed inclined to seek repose, and assumed the attitude of a listener.

"Father Cole," inquired Gray Lester, "what do you think of the propriety and safety of leaving out all our old delegates and putting in new ones, as is proposed and advocated by some of our younger brethren ?"

Father Cole answered : "Unless your former delegates have deteriorated in piety, intellectuality, experience, and love for and devotion to the interests of the Church, I think it would be very wrong. If our former delegates have been faithful and successful, and show no signs of decay in the essential qualifications of representatives of our Conference in the General Conference, they are only the better prepared to represent us again, and we may safely trust them to do it. The children of this world are wiser in such matters than the children of light sometimes show themselves to be ; for when they find a faithful and trustworthy Representative or Senator they have often been known to continue him in Congress from twenty to thirty years."

"I would like to have Father Walker's opinion on another point which is exciting considerable interest among some of the members of our Conference in relation to our contemplated election to-morrow," remarked Jackson Innis. "It is proposed to leave out half of our

former delegation, and supply their places with younger men, in order that they may be learning the way to General Conference, and become personally acquainted with the duties and responsibilities of a delegate."

"Of course," replied Father Walker, "as our old and well-tried delegates die, or from other causes become unable to represent us in the General Conference, we will have to supply their places with new men, but we have no need to elect any one merely to learn the way there, and become acquainted with the duties and responsibilities of a delegate. The only safe and legitimate way to a seat in the General Conference is to become worthy and well qualified for it, and under no pretense whatever should we send a man there who is not. My invariable rule is to vote for the best men we have on hand at the time, and trust in Providence for the future. One important consideration in electing our delegates seems to escape the minds of some brethren altogether in casting their votes, which is, that our delegates are the direct representatives of our Annual Conference; and the intellectual, moral and orthodox grade of our Conference will be determined by the delegates of other Conferences, by the caliber and character of the men we elect to represent us. If they should fall quite below par in the pulpit—should be mere sinecures in the General Conference—should outrage the rules of ministerial propriety either in public or private, or should impede the business of the Conference by an excessive penchant for speech-making, in either case they would reflect discredit on our Annual Conference. Let us then elect the best, and, in every sense of the word, the most reliable men we have. I

any of our former representatives have become indolent and anti-progressive—so much so that our younger ministers have evidently overtopped them in all essential qualifications for the high and important position—then it is a duty that we owe to ourselves, as well as to the best interests of the Church, to leave out the former and send the latter.”

“Bishop,” said Randall Cardin, “as I am not a candidate for the office, and, to judge from the past, will scarcely be thought of in that connection, except by the preachers of my former district, if it is not inconsistent with your sense of propriety, I wish you would make a few suggestions to the Conference just before the election, against the unministerial, not to say injurious, practice of some men in throwing away their votes by casting them for men that they know will not, and ought not to be elected. I remember well when we were only entitled to three Delegates, they got every vote in the Conference except their own; but, at the last two elections, especially, it has been far otherwise. In some instances our most able and most deserving ministers have been elected by a bare majority of all the votes, and only then, sometimes, after several ballottings, while others have seemed to be accidentally left out who ought to have been elected. The brethren, doubtless, have various reasons for thus throwing away their votes, all of which I think are unworthy to be connected with the holy and important interests at stake.”

“If such is the fact, Brother Cardin,” replied the Bishop, “there will not only be no impropriety in my making a few suggestions against the practice, but it

becomes my duty to do so; as it is not only little and undignified for ministers to act in this way, but it tamters with the dearest and most important interests of the Church. I do not see how conscientious ministers of Jesus Christ, who are taught to do everything on such occasions as 'in the immediate presence of God' can so far lose sight of the dictates of a pure conscience and of the vast interests involved as to act in this way. As Brother Walker has very justly remarked, 'always vote for the best men you have on hand.' The supper bell rings," continued the Bishop, "and I am requested by my hostess, Mrs. Warham, to ask Brothers Cole and Walker to give us the pleasure of their company at the supper table; and, in behalf of the Council, I ask you to meet with us again to-night and give us your advice in disposing of a few difficult cases we have on our unstationed list" The brethren agreed to do so, and we adjourned to meet after supper.

At 7½ o'clock P. M. the Council met again, pursuant to adjournment. After prayer by Brother Walker, the Bishop requested me to call over, one at a time, the names of the preachers not yet stationed. The first name on my list was Joab Dodgey, who, it will be remembered, was dropped in the early part of the Conference on account of his great delinquency in his studies, and various other shortcomings; and was afterward, on a motion to reconsider his case, restored and continued on trial. After his restoration his name had been often called in the Bishop's Council, but no Presiding Elder would consent to have him on his district. The Bishop now informed us that "his case must be disposed of in some way. If the Conference left him on

his hands until the final revision of the appointments he would be compelled to put him down somewhere. Now go to work," said he, "and dispose of the case of Joab Dodgey; and I trust you will make such a disposition of it that it will never trouble either the Conference or the Council again."

The Presiding Elders looked silently at each other with troubled countenances, each seeming to wish that the others would suggest something plausible for the relief of the case.

"Bishop," said Brother Reedum, "after some further reflection I think, perhaps, it would be best to transpose two of the preachers on the Cherryville District, and I now propose—"

"You need not propose anything, Brother Reedum," quickly interposed the Bishop, "until you dispose of the case of Joab Dodgey."

"I wish that motion to reconsider his case had failed, and he had remained dropped when he was dropped," sadly remarked Brother Hartford.

"But it did prevail by a majority of two, Brother Hartford, and left Dodgey on our hands," replied the Bishop, "and we have now to dispose of him in some way."

Jackson Innis said, "Bishop, suppose we take up the next name on the list and see what can be done with that, and—"

"The name before the Council," said the Bishop, "is Joab Dodgey, and I will not permit any other case to be considered until this one is disposed of. What will you do with Joab Dodgey, a probationer in your Conference?"

"I suggest," said Father Cole, "that Brother Cardin, his late Presiding Elder, inform him at the earliest opportunity that there is no suitable place for him in the Conference, and request him to retire voluntarily."

"I must object to that, Mr. President," replied Brother Cardin, "for Brother Dodgey appears to be very much hurt at my plain dealing with him during the past year, and especially at my honest representation of him before the Conference. It would be better for any other member of the Council to go on this mission than I."

"Well," said Father Walker, "I have but little acquaintance personally with this young brother, and hesitate to give any opinion about him; but how would it do to try him another year, as a junior preacher on some circuit? Perhaps the substantial hint the Conference gave him the other day when it dropped him may work a reformation on the points complained of."

"Not a word of that, Mr. President," quickly responded Brother Cardin; "Brother Walker does not know the settled waywardness of Joab Dodgey. Such an arrangement might be charitable to him, but it would be very uncharitable to any circuit he might be placed on."

"Mr. President," said Jackson Innis, "I move that Brother Lester be appointed a committee of one to inform Joab Dodgey, at sunrise in the morning, that if he will not voluntarily retire to-morrow, a motion will be made to reconsider his case a second time, which, if successful, will be immediately followed by a motion to drop him from the Conference."

"I object to that part of the motion, Mr. President,"

said Brother Cardin, "which requires the information to be given at sunrise. I venture to say if this is carried out literally, Brother Lester, or some one else, will have to enter his bed-chamber and wake him up in order to do it. He has too much reverence for the sun, or too much of something else, to rise before he does."

"Our business now requires some haste, brethren," said the Bishop, "and there will be no impropriety in giving Brother Dodgey an early call, that he may have the more time for reflection on the subject, and to decide what he will do."

"Before the motion is put, Mr. President," said Brother Lester, "I wish it distinctly understood if I go on this errand, I go as the duly appointed proxy of this whole Council, and by their authority."

"That is what I intended by my resolution," said Brother Innis.

"Now we are making some progress," said the Bishop. "Give us the next name on your list, Brother Howe."

I announced the name of Orrin Mandell, who had been tried several years in the regular work, and found to be wholly inefficient and unacceptable, the general complaint against him being that he was emphatically a negative character; and while there was nothing special against his Christian character, his ministerial character was looked upon as a mere blank. He had been so generally unacceptable among the white congregations that he had been, no doubt injudiciously, appointed on a colored mission, where he proved to be as worthless as he had been elsewhere. When his case passed in review before the Conference, Brother Hartford his Presiding

Elder, said he had nothing against his moral character, but represented him as being exceedingly inefficient in all his ministerial duties. Notwithstanding this, the Conference passed his character, apparently without reflecting upon consequences, and left him in the hands of the Bishop and his Council as eligible for an appointment. Up to this time, however, no Presiding Elder would consent to have him appointed on his District, and there was a manifest determination in the Council to relieve the Conference from any further trouble with such a useless burden.

“What will you do with Brother Mandell, brethren?” inquired the Bishop. “Unless you can find a place for him to-night, I shall inform the Conference to-morrow morning that they have placed a preacher in my hands that none of the Presiding Elders will consent to have on any work in their districts; and then, if he will not voluntarily locate, or the Conference dispose of him in some other way, I will be compelled to give him an appointment somewhere within your bounds.”

“How would it do, Bishop, to give him an Agency?” inquired Brother Cardin. “We ought to have an Agent for the Bible Cause, and another for Sabbath Schools.”

“It would not do at all, Brother Cardin,” replied the Bishop. “I trust you do not think seriously of recommending a man as agent for some of our most important Church interests who has already proved himself to be wholly inefficient and unacceptable everywhere else. Such a course would soon bring all our Agencies into utter disrepute. An Agent to collect and disburse the voluntary contributions of the people for religious purposes ought not only to be rigidly honest, a good

financier, a polished gentleman, but also a man of superior talents and untiring industry. From your representation of Brother Mandell, he has not the first requisite qualification for an Agent, except that of honesty. I can not consent to ruin an Agency by appointing a man to it merely to get clear of him for the present. Better have no Agent at all than one generally unacceptable to the people."

"Brother Reedum said: "Mr. President, I believe we had better look this difficulty right in the face and dispose of at it once. We have got a man here who, after a fair trial, running through several years, we find does not answer any of the purposes of an itinerant preacher and pastor, and my opinion is we had better relieve ourselves, the Conference and the regular itinerant work of such a useless appendage. As the most charitable course we can take, as his Christian character appears to be good, let us advise him to locate—and in order to secure the point, let us tell him plainly our reasons for it; it is too late in our session to hesitate any longer about these knotty cases. If men either can not or will not answer the purposes of our Conference Association, they ought not to complain if we send them back from whence they came."

"I accord with the views of Brother Reedum, Mr. President," said Brother Ransom, "and I now move that he be appointed in behalf of the Council to request Brother Mandell to ask for a location, and to inform him that, if he does not retire voluntarily, we will be compelled to take measures for his involuntary location."

The motion passed unanimously, and Brother Reedum

assured us it should be carried out early in the morning.

“Thanks be given to our Father in heaven!” ejaculated the Bishop. “We have only two more of those difficult cases to dispose of, and, from what Brother Ransom told me as soon as he entered the Council Chamber this evening, I think one of them will give us greater cause of joy and thanksgiving than of perplexity and sorrow. I refer to the case of Brother Crookall; but the case of Simon Shurkey next demands our consideration. Here, brethren, you have a man in Elder’s Orders, who has been one of you for eight years, and if only half the complaints against him are well founded, it will be a calamity to any circuit to have him placed on it. His unministerial habits are so fixed I fear he can not be cured—at least I have seldom known such cases permanently cured. You have had sufficient time to reflect on this case since it passed the Conference; now what will you do with it?”

“I think,” said Brother Hartford, “that our venerable brethren—Cole and Walker—who are with us this evening, may do us, the Conference, and the Church, a good service, by advising Brother Shurkey to ask for a location. They can remind him of the fact that either the itinerancy does not suit him, or he does not suit it, as he is always in difficulties; and that he ought, as an honorable man and Christian, to dissolve his connection with the Conference and retire to the local brotherhood, where he can preach when, and where, and as long as it suits himself and the people; and where he can change the field of his operations as often as circumstances suggest the propriety of doing so. The brethren might also suggest that his children are now

about the age to require his presence and personal attention in forming their habits and superintending their education."

"I am opposed to that, Mr. President," said Gray Lester, "because I think it wrong to saddle a man on the local brotherhood who is not acceptable as a traveling preacher. This looks too much like making a convenience of them as a depository for our useless trash."

"In that view of the subject, Brother Lester," said the Bishop, "you are probably wrong. We admit, both in theory and practice, that some men are as truly called of God to be local preachers as others are to be itinerant preachers; and if a man is fitted only by nature and grace for a local preacher, it would do both him and the Church great injustice to attempt to make him a traveling preacher; and the same may be said of an attempt to confine a man to the local ranks who is fitted, both by nature and grace, for the itinerancy. In this matter 'let every man wherein he is called therein abide with God.' You have tried Brother Shurkey in the itinerancy until you ought to be satisfied that he is almost wholly unsuitable for it, and yet you esteem him a good man, and, at times, an effective preacher; try him now for a time in a local relation, and perhaps you will see that to be his Providential position in the Church."

The arrangement was now completed for Brothers Cole and Walker to see Brother Shurkey early in the morning and advise him accordingly.

The Bishop now said: "The only remaining name on what you sometimes playfully call 'the reserved list' is that of Abner Crookall; and from what Brother Ransom

tells me, the preliminary steps to a regular disciplinary course already taken have had the most salutary effect on him, that could have been desired. The committee appointed on his case have had a free conversation with him, and he has given every assurance of amendment that could be asked, and I think we may as well give him an appointment at once; if anything unfavorable should occur to-morrow, we can make any change that may be necessary."

After some discussion, his name was placed opposite that of an eligible circuit, where his family could be well sustained, provided he reformed on the points complained of and attended to his pastoral duties as he had usually done.

The Bishop now informed us that we would meet in Council to-morrow afternoon for the last time, to make any revision of the appointments that might appear necessary, and to make the missionary appropriations for the coming year. He requested Brothers Cole and Walker to be present with us again. The Council then adjourned.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Tuesday Morning—Reports of Committees—Small Dividends to Conference Beneficiaries—Embarrassments of the Council Made Known to the Conference by the Bishop, and Relief Asked for—Joab Dodgey Again—Orrin Mandell Gets Out of the Way—Simon Shurkey Bids the Conference an Affectionate Farewell—Abner Crookall Set Right by the Faithful Application of Discipline—Memoirs of Deceased Ministers—Election of Delegates to the General Conference—Great Anxiety of some of the Preachers to Have the Appointments Announced at an Early Hour—Last Meeting of the Council—Missionary Appropriations—Discussion Among the Elders on the Episcopacy—Final Adjournment of the Council.

The Conference met on Tuesday morning, pursuant to adjournment, and was opened with the usual religious exercises. The Stewards of Conference made their report, giving to the widows and orphans of deceased ministers, the superannuated preachers and other beneficiaries of the Conference only seventy cents in the dollar on their disciplinary claims. This was an advance on former dividends, but was still quite below what it ought to have been. Had all the preachers been as successful the preceding year in making Conference collections as some had been, the whole claim could easily have been met. It is sad to think that we so often fail to make up the very moderate pittance allowed these worthy and often very dependent claimants on the voluntary contributions of the people. Other committees also made their final reports, which, with slight amendments, were adopted.

After which the Bishop informed the Conference “that the Council had found great difficulty in attempting to station a few men who had passed the Conference and been left on their hands for appointments; that up to that date three of them had been rejected by every Presiding Elder—not so much on account of objections to

their Christian character as to their want of the capacity, zeal and prudence necessary for traveling preachers. He did not know whether they were now inclined to retire voluntarily or not; if they were not, he requested the Conference to take them off his hands; and if it did not, he would be under the necessity of appointing them to some work contrary to the convictions of his judgment. He feared the members of Conference had permitted their charitable feelings to lead them into an error in retaining these brethren after they had given such unmistakable evidence of their unsuitableness for itinerant preachers."

After these remarks he called the name of Joab Dodgey.

Brother Lester arose to his feet and said: "Mr. President, after considerable delay in gaining access to Brother Dodgey at his boarding house early this morning, I delivered a message to him as the proxy of the Council, in which he was affectionately requested to relieve us from all further difficulty in his case by asking a discontinuance. He at first peremptorily refused to do so, stating that the Conference had deliberately re-instated him, after those who were prejudiced against him had once succeeded in having him dropped. I then told him that if he did not ask to be discontinued at his own request, a motion would be made to reconsider his case a second time, which would doubtless prevail, and would be immediately succeeded by a motion to drop him from the list of traveling preachers, and the additional fact that none of the Presiding Elders would consent to take him on any work in their districts would secure its passage; and the simple question for

him to decide was, whether he would retire voluntarily or involuntarily. He seemed much disturbed in mind, but would give me no definite answer until we met at the door of the Conference, when he requested me to ask a discontinuance for him, which request I now make in his behalf." Without any further remarks, a motion was made and carried to grant his request.

The name of Orrin Mandell was next announced by the Bishop, whereupon Brother Reedum arose and said, "I have just had a free and full conversation with Brother Mandell in behalf of the Council in relation to the difficulties in his case, and, with a manliness which I highly appreciate, he said that if the Council could not find a place for him up to this late hour, whatever his private opinion might be about the matter, it was a duty he owed to himself to retire from a position where he was so unacceptable; and, with his best wishes for the continued prosperity of the Conference, and of the preachers individually, he requests, through me, a location."

His request being granted, the name of Simon Shurkey was next called.

Brother Walker arose and said, "Mr. President, Brother Cole and myself, by the unanimous request of the Council, had a kind and brotherly conversation with Brother Shurkey this morning in relation to the many complaints against him as a traveling preacher for several years in succession, and suggested that, perhaps, he was not in his proper providential position; that unless he was criminally at fault, either he did not suit the itinerant work, or the work did not suit him; and that he had better calmly review his itinerant history,

and unless he could feel assured of being both willing and able to make the required amendment in all those matters complained of, he had better retire to the local ranks. We also suggested that this was a very important crisis in the rearing and education of his children, and, if he would, he could be very usefully employed about home. He replied that he had been thinking soberly and prayerfully about these matters since his case passed the Conference, and his feelings had undergone a great change. It was indeed very humiliating to give up the itinerancy after having spent eight years in the Conference; but he was becoming more and more convinced that he was in his nature and habits unsuitable for the work; and as he could not, as a conscientious and honorable man, ask the Conference to bend their long-established and well-tried rules to accommodate his deficiencies, he believed it to be best for him to locate. He began to look with increasing pleasure and interest on the voluntary and adjunct labors of a local preacher, and thought he could enjoy himself in that sphere very well. He believed that his connection with the itinerancy was a well-intended mistake on his part, as well as on the part of the Conference. It had always been exceedingly irksome to his feelings to be so much away from home and to attend to the duties of a traveling preacher. With his present views and feelings he could locate with a clear conscience, and he anticipated much happiness in being permitted to stay at home unmolested. He leaves the Conference with the kindest feelings toward all the preachers, and requests that they call on him and his family as often as it is their will and pleasure to do so."

Brother Cole corroborated Brother Walker's report of the case, whereupon a motion was made and carried to grant Brother Shurkey a location.

The report of the committee appointed yesterday on the case of Abner Crookall was now called for. Brother Nathaniel Harney, the chairman of the committee, reported "that they had spent most of the afternoon of yesterday inquiring into the causes of Brother Crookall's indebtedness, and in endeavoring to ascertain what his purposes are in regard to the future. We endeavored to show him wherein he had, unintentionally perhaps, violated Christian morals, as well as the positive rules of the Church, by going in debt without a reasonable probability of being able to make payment when due. He frankly acknowledged that his finances were in a deplorable condition, and that it was the result of errors, both in theory and practice, into which he had fallen. He had yielded to the opinion, somehow, that a minister's apparel and equipage added considerably to his standing and influence in society, and that he had been liberal in his outfit. His family also had imbibed similar notions, and they had been increasingly extravagant in their expenditures. He had never intended to do wrong, or to leave a just debt unpaid; but sad experience had taught him that he had been too liberal in his expenditures, and too sanguine of his ability to pay his indebtedness at maturity. After a severe conflict in his mind, he had now resolved to live within his income, and, as is his bounden duty, to require his family to do so, too. He believed they would be much happier to be out of debt, and to feel that what they have is their own, however little it may be. His

former financial plans and practice had worked him only evil, and, by the help of God, he was determined on a thorough system of retrenchment and reformation. He believed he was called of God to the pastoral office, and he would now constantly aim to make everything else subservient to his success as an exemplary minister of the New Testament. He hoped to deserve hereafter the forbearance and good will of the Conference, and in a few years, at most, to be able to report himself free from debt."

This report enlisted the sympathies of the Conference very much in Brother Crookall's favor, for they looked on him as a very valuable minister, with the exception of the difficulties growing out of his extravagance and bad financing. Several influential brethren, both of the clergy and laity, pledged themselves to assist him in paying up his old debts, if he would carry out his present purposes of retrenchment and reformation in good faith; and with this understanding his character now passed.

"Now, brethren," said the Bishop, "let me call your attention to the importance of dealing faithfully with an erring brother, and of applying, if necessary, our excellent disciplinary rules to bring about a reformation. By faithful dealing you have led Brother Crookall to turn a very important crisis in his personal history and that of his family. If he is faithful to his present purposes, I confidently expect him to make a valuable minister the remainder of his life."

The Bishop now inquired if the Committee on Memoirs was ready to report, and was answered by the chairman affirmatively. This announcement produced

universal silence and solemnity in the Conference. To hear the name of a deceased fellow-laborer called for the last time in the regular routine of Conference business; to listen to a short account of his Christian character, labors and suffering in the ministry, ended by a peaceful, perhaps triumphant, death; to feel that he is gone from our midst to return no more; that we shall not enjoy his society again until we meet above; and then to feel how soon we must follow him, and leave our surviving brethren to perform similar remembrances that once we were of the Conference, but to be so no more forever, are all considerations well calculated to solemnize, soften and subdue our hearts. Three of our brethren had died during the year, and each of the three members of the committee had prepared a memoir of one.

The first memoir read was that of Jonathan Coleworth. "He was a single man, under twenty-four years of age; had been but a few years in the Conference; was deeply and uniformly pious, intelligent, and very studious; a good disciplinarian, and attentive to all his pastoral duties, and was above mediocrity in his pulpit performances. The predominant features in his character were innocence, purity of heart and life, prudence in all things, and a constant and well-tempered zeal for the salvation of souls. His diary and letters exhibit his ardent aspirations after biblical knowledge, holiness, and usefulness, and his short and brilliant career was a living commentary on the fixed purposes of his heart." Several noteworthy incidents were briefly brought to view in his memoir. One was his having obtained the blessing of entire sanctification, with the abiding wit-

ness of this gracious state, not many months before his death. He had diligently studied the nature and extent of sanctification, and had for some time been an earnest seeker after the great salvation. On one of his few rest days he retired from the house where he was stopping to an adjoining forest, and remained absent so long that the lady of the house became very uneasy, and was thinking seriously of sending a servant to search for him, when he returned, with a countenance radiant with light, love and joy. When she referred to the unusual length of his absence, he told her of the long and terrible conflict with inbred sin and unbelief through which he had passed, and his triumph through faith in a willing and all-sufficient Savior. From this time she said he appeared more like an inhabitant of another world than this. Doubtless he was fast ripening for that heaven to which he went a few months after. Another incident was an abiding and increasing presentment of his approaching death for several months before it occurred. Why it was so who can tell? It is several times mentioned in his manuscript journals, was occasionally referred to in his sermons and exhortations, and so deeply fixed was the impression that on his last round he bade several of his churches and congregations a final farewell, accompanied with suitable warnings and exhortations. A terrible epidemic, in the form of what is called congestive fever, prevailed to such an extent in a portion of his circuit that there were scarcely enough well people to nurse the sick and bury the dead. While filling his appointments in that part of his circuit, and visiting the sick and dying, he was stricken down with the prevailing fever. After

having the fever three or four days, he walked several hundred yards to converse and pray with a man on his death-bed who had never been converted. The visit was successful, and after exhibiting the scriptural evidences of true penitence, the poor fellow was happily converted, and died blessing God, and the dear young preacher for his faithfulness in warning, instructing and praying for him. The dying young minister persisted in reading his daily lesson in the Bible as long as he had ability to scan its sacred pages, and to give words of warning, exhortation and encouragement to all who approached him. A prominent and beloved member of his charge was also on his death bed in the immediate vicinity, and the few well people had made an arrangement to blow a horn when either of them died, that all that could be spared might repair to the place to assist in laying him out, and in other preliminaries to the burial. This arrangement the dying young minister had overheard, without its being intended by those who made it, and when, only a few hours before his death, he heard the sound of the horn, he joyfully exclaimed, 'There! Brother McIntosh has got off before me, but I will soon follow him. Glory be to God!' A few hours more ended the earthly history of one of the brightest lights we ever had among us. How mysterious that one so young, so innocent, so lovely, talented and promising should be cut off so early in life! 'But my thoughts are not your thoughts, saith the Lord.' As the great object of living in this world is to get safely out of it, he seemed fully to have accomplished the end of his probation."

The next memoir read was that of Parmenas Ashley.

Of his early history but little was known, as he came a missionary from a distant Conference to ours, about the third or fourth year of his ministry. While among us his Christian and ministerial character was without blame. He had the pastoral charge of many of our largest and most unhealthy circuits, and presided several years on a district large in territory, but small in the number of circuits. In the middle of life he was quite broke down by incessant labors and repeated attacks of bilious fever incident to a low country. He had generally been very poor in worldly substance, but toward the close of life he gradually accumulated property enough to leave his family a competency when he died. He was more a man of work than of books; hence he rose but little above mediocrity in literary and theological attainments. There was too great a sameness in his sermons to interest the same congregation long, and on this account it was, perhaps, fortunate that he was kept on large works, where he could preach, in substance, the same sermons to many congregations. The uniformity of his goodness—the constancy of his zeal, and the regularity with which he attended to all his duties, secured him a favorable reception wherever he preached. He was on the superannuated list several years before he died. His decline to the grave was gradual, and his death was as tranquil as the setting sun. All who knew him felt that he had fallen asleep in Jesus.

The last memoir was that of Orville Langley. When he first professed a call to the ministry he was an unlettered, unpolished youth, and had nothing to recommend him but good sense and fervent piety. Before he passed his novitiate, however, he gave evidence of a mind

capable of extraordinary and rapid improvement. The rapidity with which he read one standard work after another was without a parallel in our Conference; and, what was more astonishing, he seemed to retain, and could readily use, as occasion required, almost everything he read. His zeal was ardent, but not enthusiastic; and his perseverance in all the duties of the ministry was unceasing while he had ability to attend to them. He had an extraordinary compass of voice—his articulation was very distinct—he was a model sermonizer, and every way worthy of imitation as a preacher, except the habit of using too much physical exertion in the delivery of his sermons. It was not often that extraordinary movements took place immediately under his preaching, in the way of sudden awakenings and conversions; yet he attracted vast multitudes to his churches, and Methodism gradually increased and spread abroad within the range of his influence as long as he lived. He was, for more than a quarter of a century, the leading spirit of our Conference, and honorably had he earned and well did he deserve the position assigned him by the common consent of his brethren. Sooner or later he filled all the higher offices in our Conference, and was often placed in charge of the most important city stations and presided over the most important districts. He had some severe trials toward the close of life, growing out of the prominence which others, more than himself, gave him in politics. His patriotism was pure and ardent, and its ardor may have led him into a few indiscretions; but in all, and through all, his uniform and fervent piety shown conspicuously. But he died! Yes, Orville Langley, with all his talents,

popularity and vast influence as a minister of Jesus Christ, was stricken down by severe and protracted sickness. But his memoirist gave us a very encouraging account of the steadiness of his faith in Christ and the consolations of Divine grace which he enjoyed as he slowly descended to the tomb. There was much weeping among the preachers before the reading of the memoir was closed. The old ministers wept because they had lost the companion of long and happy years ; and the younger ones wept because they had lost the patron and guide of their youth. After the memoirs were read and each one adopted, the Bishop made a few touching remarks. He reminded us "that though our ministers were men of like passions with others, and had all the usual conflicts of Christians, in addition to those peculiar to the ministry, and led lives of privation, toil and suffering, they almost universally died well."

As there seemed to be some hesitation in resuming business immediately, several of the brethren commenced singing that appropriate hymn, the 737th in our hymn-book, beginning

"What, though the arm of conqu'ring death."

Never had it seemed so appropriate as now. While it soothed our bereaved and sorrowing hearts it animated and encouraged our faith. After the conclusion of the hymn there was a few moments of unbroken silence, after which the Bishop said, "Brethren, our work on earth is not done yet, and we should betake ourselves to it with renewed diligence, as life is short and uncertain in its duration."

The next thing that came up in the regular business was that of electing delegates to the ensuing General

Conference. The Bishop informed us that we were entitled to six, and then proceeded to say, "as all the interest, brethren, that I can feel in this election is to see you do right, by electing the best and ablest ministers you have to represent your interests in the General Conference, I may be permitted to make a few remarks as to the only allowable motives that should control every vote cast. No man among you is a published candidate for a seat in the General Conference, and yet every Elder who has traveled four calendar years, and is now in full connection, is eligible; and it is to be expected, where so many are eligible and equally worthy and well qualified, that the voting will be somewhat difusive. But I have noticed with regret, of late years, what seems to be a growing evil in connection with the election of our delegates. I refer to a disposition among some brethren to throw away their votes, by voting for men that they know can not, and ought not, to be elected. Whether this is done as a compliment to those brethren, or as an excuse for not voting for some one else better qualified, or for the purpose of mortifying the feelings of old and well deserving men, or merely for the purpose of exercising the right to vote for whom they please, it is all wrong; and you should not tamper with the paramount interests of the Church in a way so little becoming the good sense and dignity of ministers of the Gospel. Remember that it is the prerogative of the General Conference to revise your Church polity, subject to certain restrictions; to originate new plans to further the great work of spreading scriptural holiness all over these lands; to look into the administration of all your Bishops, and to elect new ones when neces-

sary; and to see that all the acts of the Annual Conferences are in strict conformity to the laws of the Church. You see, then, brethren, what important matters have to be considered and acted upon by the General Conference; and, in view of this, I trust none of you will vote for any man that you will not be willing to intrust with all these important matters. Vote for men of experience--of mature judgment; not prone to run into extremes or to be led off by sudden impulses. Elect men that will be creditable to you, and that will reflect favorably the character of your Conference in the estimation of strangers. Now appoint your tellers and prepare your ballots."

Brothers Burgess, Dines and Everton were appointed tellers, and the balloting proceeded immediately. On the first ballot Zedekiah Reedum, Josephus Hartford, William Ransom and Robert Cole were elected. On the second ballot Joab Walker and Gray Lester were elected, and, after several other ballotings, Jackson Innis, Randall Cardin and John Burgess were elected reserve delegates.

It was now near the time for adjournment, and the Bishop suggested that all the regular business having been finished, the Conference might adjourn to meet to-morrow morning, at 10 o'clock, preparatory to receiving the appointments.

"But, Mr. President," said two or three earnest voices, "can we not have the appointments read out at three o'clock this afternoon? It would greatly accommodate those of us who go home by railroad, as the cars leave this evening at seven o'clock." Before the Bishop could answer several more voices inquired, "if

the appointments could not be read out to-night, as the western bound stage would leave at five o'clock in the morning? This arrangement would enable half a dozen to get home a day sooner."

Other pleas were urged for the announcement of the appointments, either in the afternoon or at night; and before the Bishop could call the Conference to order half a dozen speakers were attempting to get his ear, while as many more were on their feet waiting for an opportunity.

The Bishop gave a heavy rap with his gavel and, with a pleasant smile, requested the Conference to come to order. Order being restored, the Bishop said: "I presume, after all, brethren, your anxiety is not so much to get home at an early hour as to have the veil raised from your coming destiny, and to know either the best or the worst as to your next fields of labor. Do not be uneasy, brethren; all of you who are effective shall have appointments, most of them pleasant fields for a zealous minister to labor in; but some are very hard ones, which, I hope, by careful cultivation, you will make quite easy by the end of the coming year. I am under the necessity of informing you that the appointments can not be announced before 10 o'clock to-morrow morning. The Missionary Committee has to meet this afternoon to make all the missionary appropriations; and then I must have time, after they get through, to fill up and sign all the drafts for distribution among the Presiding Elders. And, in addition, I shall need the services of your Secretary from daylight in the morning until the breakfast hour to assist me in making out a fair copy of the appointments, with all the preachers'

names correctly spelled, and the Licentiates, Deacons and Elders properly distinguished, for the printed minutes. Moreover, many of our friends from the adjacent country would like to be present to witness our closing exercises who could not be present either this afternoon or to-night; so you see we are not ready to announce the appointments at so early an hour. I do not think the good people of Cherryville are tired of our company yet; then let us be quiet until all our work is done, and well done, and then we can go home with an easy conscience."

"In addition to what you have said, Mr. President," said Brother Reedum, "we have appointments for preaching in all the churches to-night (except the Episcopal and Catholic, interjected Jackson Innis, in an under tone), and the preachers have been announced and are making preparations accordingly. There is a blessed work of grace in progress in several of the Churches, and some of the people are anxiously wishing that some of the preachers may be prevailed on to stay and labor with us a week longer at least." By this time all was quiet, and a spirit of resignation seemed to come even on those who had expressed the greatest anxiety to have the appointments read at an early hour.

The Conference now adjourned, and we were dismissed with the Doxology and Benediction.

Most of the ministers spent the afternoon in social and religious intercourse with each other and the families where they had spent such a happy week. Some were making arrangements to have their horses brought in from the country at an early hour in the morning, and others to various items of business, in

order that nothing might prevent them from starting with the foremost on final adjournment. But, before we close this chapter, we must take another look into the Bishop's Council.

At three o'clock, P. M., it met as usual, and was opened with prayer by Brother Henry Newbern, who had been notified that he was to be a Presiding Elder, and requested to be present in order to make some arrangements for his first round of Quarterly meetings.

The Bishop inquired of the Council "if they knew of any revision that ought to be made in the adjustment of the charges or in the appointments of the preachers? If so, it must be done now, as he wished a perfected copy left in his hands to-night, from which he could make out his report for the printed minutes early in the morning."

We all answered that we knew of no change necessary to be made, except Brother Reedum, who said, "when we were so perplexed last night with the case of one Joab Dodgey. I thought my mind was made up to discuss the policy of transposing two of the preachers on the Cherryville District, but you would not permit it to be done at that time, which I now think was fortunate for all concerned; for, after being relieved of the Dodgey case, and other similar perplexities, my mind became more calm, and better prepared for reflection, and I now believe it will be best to let the appointments stand as they are."

The Presiding Elders being, *ex-officio*, the Missionary Committee, the Bishop requested them to make the appropriations for the various missions within the bounds of the Conference, and furnish him with their

report as soon as convenient, that he might fill up the drafts and distribute them before they separated for the night. We elected Brother Reedum our chairman, and, taking up the Districts in order, made the appropriations according to the disciplinary claims of the ministers that we knew were appointed on the missions. The principal debate was whether we would make an appropriation to Smith's Valley Mission or not. It was argued that the failure of Jacob Sprouts to get his salary there last year was no criterion to judge either the ability or the willingness of the people to pay their preacher; that such a man as Sprouts was calculated to break down the finances of any circuit, and that with the man now appointed to that work it would be self-supporting.

"Mr. President," said Brother Innis, addressing Brother Reedum, "Solomon says, 'a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold,' and I reckon one reason why he said so was, that if a man gets a bad name by his bad conduct he never gets clear of it, but, like his shadow, it follows him everywhere through life. Poor Jacob Sprouts! I would dislike very much to carry such a reputation through life as he has acquired."

"Well, *he* need not," Brother Reedum replied. "If instead of finding fault with the Conference for the just censure thrown upon him for his unministerial conduct, he would thoroughly reform and give good evidence of permanent amendment, he would find a disposition, especially among Christians, to forgive and lose sight of the past and receive and treat him in keeping with his present good character. If Brother Sprouts would become what a Christian and minister ought to be, he

might yet be a respectable and useful man. But I interrupted you, Brother Innis; please speak to the appropriation."

"Well, sir," continued Brother Innis, "we have already, after due deliberation, placed Smith's Valley on the list of missions, and I suggest that we appropriate one hundred and fifty dollars to the missionary, with the understanding that if he receive his disciplinary allowance from the mission, he is to return this amount to the missionary treasury, or any portion of it that may not be needed to make up his salary."

This suggestion was agreed to, and we soon placed a list of the appropriations in the hands of the Bishop.

"I thank you, brethren," said the Bishop, "for your expedition in this matter; it gives me sufficient time to fill up and sign the drafts by sundown. And now, if you will retire to Brother Howe's room, taking with you Brothers Cole and Walker, you may spend an hour in social intercourse, by the end of which I will have the drafts ready for distribution."

We retired with light hearts, feeling that our responsible and arduous work was done, and we trusted satisfactorily to all parties. We were soon comfortably seated in my room, while a few splinters of pine set the coals all aglow, so that we were soon cheered with a good fire. As we now had no official business to transact, we all felt that we were the juniors of Brothers Cole and Walker, and were looking to them to lead in conversation, when Brother Walker remarked, "What a precious Conference we have had! It reminds me of years long gone by, and our present Bishop presides over the Conference so much like that model of all good

Bishops, Robert R. Roberts, it makes me feel as though I was living some of my happiest days over again."

"Yes," replied Father Cole, "he presides with a sufficient degree of firmness, and, withal, is so mild, affectionate and condescending to the preachers, that no man with either a moderate share of piety or good sense could find it in his heart to cross him intentionally in anything. And I have always noticed that where the Bishop and the members of Conference are of one mind, and work together for the attainment of the one great object we have in view, the spread of Scriptural holiness, we are certain to have a harmonious and successful Conference. Our Bishop feels that he is one of us—that his interests and ours are identical—and hence he unites with us fully in striving to secure and advance the interests of all."

Brother Hartford remarked "that in most cases we had been highly favored of the Lord up to this date in the selection of our Bishops—not one of them had ever been impeached for immorality or unchristian conduct, and, with but few exceptions, their administration had generally been approved; but, on one or two occasions within his recollection, the Conference had found it necessary to exercise some patience and forbearance even toward a Bishop: As a general rule, I have noticed in all deliberative bodies where the presiding officer assumes a lordly bearing, and allows himself to become austere, abrupt, dictatorial, hypercritical and fault-finding, and is disrespectful to the members of the body, the same spirit is apt to become diffused among them; and then a very unpleasant, not to say disgraceful, state of affairs is too apt to follow. I remember, with

more heartfelt sorrow, our Conference at Piedmont, eight or ten years ago, than any of the numerous Conferences it has been my privilege to attend within the past forty years. The Bishop we had on that occasion you all recollect. My opinion is that he was, perhaps, by nature or education, more inclined to be self-conceited, egotistic, dictatorial and overbearing than most men, and on that occasion, the first three days especially, he manifested all those unclerical and ill qualities to a fearful extent. Some of our oldest and most respected ministers were severely criticised and lectured at full length in the presence of the Conference and large audience in attendance for the most unimportant departures from what he considered parliamentary rule; and in most cases it was a mere difference of opinion between the Bishop and them as to what was really parliamentary rule in the case. Some of our Presiding Elders were accused by him of maladministration when no one else complained of them, and were severely reprimanded by him before they had an opportunity to explain any apparent discrepancy in their administration. He frequently interfered, unnecessarily, with the speakers in the regular debates of the Conference, and in some instances peremptorily ordered them to their seats. The same spirit and manner was manifested in the Council for several meetings in succession, which I never think of but with keen regret. But little was talked of among the preachers in private circles pertaining to the Conference for several days except the extraordinary course of our Bishop. And what made the state of affairs more painful was, that the Conference referred to was the first ever held in Piedmont,

and we seriously feared the people would determine the general character of our Bishops, as well as our own, from what they witnessed on that occasion. O! we literally sighed for the presence of one of our firm, but consistent and genial Bishops to heal our wounded feelings and calm our troubled spirits! The result of the whole matter was a very protracted and troublesome case in the Committee on the Episcopacy at the ensuing General Conference, which they found it exceedingly difficult to dispose of so as neither to reflect lasting discredit on the Bishop, nor upon the honor and integrity of an Annual Conference."

"But, Brother Hartford," interposed Brother Ransom, "we should always bear in mind, in connection with that unpleasant Conference, the fact that our Bishop was just recovering from a protracted and dangerous illness, and came among us very feeble and travel-worn from his long journey, so that he was not his former self, either physically or mentally."

"His late affliction, then, seems not to have been sanctified to his spiritual improvement," interposed Randall Cardin, "if it left him more than usually under the influence of his natural proclivities which tended to evil. It appears to me he ought to have come out of that affliction a more patient, humble and loving man than he seemed to be at the Piedmont Conference, at least the first three or four days of the session. After the Sabbath we got along more agreeably to all parties, and closed our session with something like the usual amount of good feeling."

"I think I know the reason of that," responded Gray. Lester. "We all—Bishop and preachers—obtained more

of the Spirit of Christ in our hearts during the truly spiritual exercises of the Sabbath, and we returned to the Conference room on Monday morning much better prepared to bear with each other and to 'fulfill the law of love' than we appeared to be on Saturday."

"No doubt that was the case, to a great extent," replied Brother Reedum. "But, to say nothing of the past, I believe, as our ministry advances in numbers, talents and influence, it becomes more and more important to fill the Episcopal Board with well-tried men, and absolutely known beforehand to be suitable for the office. I believe a majority of self-conceited, dogmatical, capricious and arbitrary Bishops would ultimately break down and ruin our General Superintendency; for, though it is true that we have some painful exceptions, the great majority of our ministers are not only men of acknowledged piety and intelligence, but they are also high-toned and honorable gentlemen, and would not submit long to be treated with disrespect and injustice by a superior Church officer, dependent on their suffrages for his high and honorable position. Indeed, we elect Bishops for specific purposes, and if ever they should fail to answer our purposes, or take advantage of their high position to lord it over their brethren, we shall be apt to dispense with their services in that capacity."

"You do not mean to say, Brother Reedum," inquired Brother Innis, "that we can do without General Superintendents, or Bishops, as we call them?"

"I do not mean to say that, exactly; though if our General Superintendency should ever become more productive of evil than of good, it will then become the

imperious duty of the Church to dispense with it and substitute something better in its place. But I have not the most remote idea or the least apprehension that such will ever be our case. What I mean to say is, that as the General Conference elects Elders to the Episcopal office for specific purposes, if they should fail to answer those purposes, or should undertake to lord it over God's heritage, the General Conference claims the power to unmake them; and I believe it will exercise that power if it should ever become necessary in order to protect the rights of the ministry or the interests of the Church. But, as I just now remarked, I have no apprehension at the present of our ever being involved in such a difficulty. I know we need not, if our representatives in the General Conference will divest themselves of all personal and sectional preferences and prejudices, and resolve never to vote for any minister to fill this high and responsible office unless they know him to have all the requisite qualifications for so great a trust."

"That is the true theory, brethren," said William Ransom. "Only let well-tried men, of the right stamp, be elected to the Episcopal office hereafter, as they have very generally been heretofore, and we have but little to fear at this point. But here comes the Bishop. He has given us rather a short hour for social intercourse."

Just as Brother Ransom finished the last sentence the Bishop rapped at the door and was invited to enter. He came in with a handful of drafts on the missionary treasury, which he at once distributed among the Presiding Elders, to be presented and cashed at maturity for the support of the missionaries in their respectiv

Districts. This being done, the Bishop was invited to a seat in our social circle, and, after a few additional remarks about the drafts, Brother Walker playfully remarked :

“ Well, Bishop, soon after we came in, and without any previous concert, we resolved ourselves into a sort of informal committee of the whole on the state of the Episcopacy, and have had quite a talk about Bishops.”

The Bishop replied : “ I flatter myself, brethren, from your acknowledged generosity and Christian charity, that you have been as lenient toward us as the safety and prosperity of the Church will justify; for we are men of like passions with yourselves, and often, in view of our infirmities and unintentional short-comings, feel that we need your forbearance as well as an interest in your prayers.”

This was said with a meekness and condescension that added, if that were possible, to our estimation of our beloved Bishop.

Just here the supper bells rang, and the Bishop remarked, as we rose up to disperse to our several boarding houses, “ that as he knew of no other business to be attended to by the Council, this meeting was our last as a Council on this occasion, and, perhaps, to some of us the last on earth. O brethren, let us live and preach Scriptural holiness faithfully in all its branches until our work is done and we are permitted to rest from its labors! I trust, through the merits of Christ Jesus, our adorable Redeemer, we will all meet in our house above. Peace be with you all, in Christ Jesus.”

As we parted we all, no doubt, felt that a week's intercourse with this holy man and with each other had been mutually beneficial.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Movements of Preachers Preparatory to an Early Start Home—Appearance of Different Companies—Vast Assemblage at Church—Homeless, but Happy and Independent Young Preachers—Inconvenience and Loss of Time in Carrying Trunks—Hymn Sung in Remembrance of Jonathan Coleworth—Preliminary Services by the Bishop—His Address to the Conference—Sublime Spectacle—Some Ministers Peculiarly Honored—Taking in New Appointments—Circulating our Books and Tracts—Pastoral Visiting—Administration of Discipline—Attention to all the Subordinate Agencies of the Church—Preaching the Gospel the Main Point—Reading Out the Appointments—Exchange of Plans—Samuel Rowland Highly Excited—An Agreeable Disappointment—Closing Scenes—Affecting Parting of the Preachers.

The Bishop had requested my assistance, with that of the Secretary of the Conference, from daylight on Wednesday morning until the hour for family prayer, in making out a correct copy for the printed minutes of the various charges as they now stood, and of the names of all the preachers correctly spelled, in connection with their appointments, distinguishing the Licentiates, Deacons, Elders, Supernumeraries and Superannuates. This being done, the Bishop informed me that my services as the Private Secretary of the Council were ended. As I was now relieved from all special duties for the present, I walked out on the streets after breakfast to enjoy the fine morning and to see what might turn up worth seeing. The first thing that attracted my attention was the unusual number of preachers hurrying to and fro, making sundry preparations for an early start home after the final adjournment of Conference. Others were making short calls on valued friends, and recounting the possibilities of meeting no more in time, and pledging their diligence in striving to meet in heaven. Soon the people were seen flocking from all quarters toward the Methodist Church, for it had been announced in all

the Churches the evening before that the Conference would assemble in our Church to receive their appointments. Various charges in the vicinity of Cherryville were well represented by persons eager to learn who was to be their Pastor the ensuing year. As I intended to make memoranda of everything noteworthy, I also went early to Church and took a seat near the pulpit, convenient for seeing as well as hearing. I found Brother Reedum there attending to the seating of the congregation, so as to leave space enough in front and to the right and left of the pulpit for the seating of the Conference. A quarter before 10 o'clock every available place in the house was occupied, and the ministers were generally present. The Secretary and his assistant were at the table with their writing apparatus, and all seemed anxious for the appearance of the Bishop. As I knew my destiny for the coming year, as well as that of every preacher in the Conference, by having been a member of the Council, I had no curiosity to gratify in reference to the appointments, so I continued my observations on passing events. The ruling thought of my mind, until the Bishop came in, was in reference to the vast influence of our Church over all gradations of society, as manifested in the assembling of such a multitude of people as crowded that spacious edifice and thronged the doors and windows for a considerable space without. I could but ejaculate, "how great is our responsibility in teaching these vast multitudes and leading them in the narrow way!"

The next thing I noticed was the preparation many of the preachers had made for an early start to their homes, where they had homes to go to, or to their cir-

cuits, where they had no other home. Quite a number came to Church on horseback, and, after hitching their horses to the fence and in the adjoining grove, walked into the Church with their spatter-dashes on and saddle-bags and umbrellas in hand, which they deposited in and around the altar. Among them was Father Cole, fully equipped as 'a circuit rider,' though his days for traveling a circuit were past. But for forty years he had been in the habit of starting with the first and traveling with the foremost, and he could not yet consent to be left behind. His company had engaged to dine, by special invitation, several miles in the country, and then make a good afternoon's ride toward home; for this reason they had everything in a state of readiness. I also noticed that ten or a dozen houseless and homeless young ministers, without families or local ties, having visited parents and other near relatives just before Conference, came to Church fully prepared to start, they knew not where, as soon as they got their appointments. There was an air of independence and contentment about them that forcibly illustrated their entire devotion to the work of the ministry and their readiness to go anywhere their elder brethren thought their services most needed. Their entire wardrobe was on their persons and in their saddle-bags, and, when mounted on horseback, their faithful circuit horse carried all along that was essential to their comfort or usefulness. Their cheerful appearance reminded me of the happy days I enjoyed when similarly situated. A few single young men, however, came with no such preparations for an early start to their new fields of labor. They had persuaded themselves that they could

not get along comfortably without packing and taking a large trunk with them wherever they go. They had left their trunks on deposit somewhere, and, let their new appointment be where it may, they must take time to move their trunks, which often occasions them the loss of weeks. The consequence is, their first round of appointments is not filled, and it takes about two rounds after that to get things in good working trim again; and all this trouble and loss grows out of their studying how many things they may possibly need during the year instead of economically deciding how many they can as well do without. Some of the preachers who traveled by railroad brought their valises and carpet-sacks with them, intending, if we got through in time, to take the twelve o'clock train, so as to travel most of the way home in daylight, in preference to taking the night train.

While we awaited the coming of the Bishop, Brother Reedum arose and remarked that, "since our last Conference, three of our fellow-laborers had gone from the toils and sorrows of earth to the rest and joys of heaven. One of them was our beloved young brother, Jonathan Coleworth, who died far from home and kindred; and he now proposed that, in remembrance of him, we unite in singing the hymn composed by William Hunter on the death of Thomas Drummond, of the Missouri Conference, who died of cholera in St. Louis, June 15th, 1835, and whose last words were, 'All is well. Tell my brethren of the Pittsburg Conference I die at my post.' The hymn commences,

"Away from his home and the friends of his youth."

The hymn was sung by the preachers and congrega-

tion with full-toned voices, and while it was in progress a spirit of weeping and rejoicing came upon the ministers. We felt indeed that we had sustained a great loss in the death of our young brother, but his godly life and happy death left us an assurance that he had gone to heaven, and, while we thought thereon, we felt increasing aspirationg to live as he had lived, and to die as he had died. Just as we concluded the hymn the Bishop came in, with his portfolio under his arm, accompanied by Colonel Warham and his family, and walked as unostentatiously into the pulpit as the most unpretending of his brethren in the ministry. He had been a regular traveling preacher near a quarter of a century, and could appreciate the anxiety of the preachers to have their appointments announced without delay, so he commenced the preliminary religious services immediately by reading the 278th hymn, beginning,

“And let our bodies part,” etc.

I thought I never had heard it so forcibly and feelingly read since I heard Bishop Roberts read it on a similar occasion, thirty-five years before. The ministers seemed to imbibe every sentiment expressed in the hymn. We sung the first six, and eleventh and twelfth verses; and such singing is rarely heard even in a Methodist congregation. The full-toned voices of more than one hundred ministers, united with the less voluminous voices of the laity, and the soft and sweet tones of the sisterhood, made such a rich volume of vocal music as is seldom enjoyed in a lifetime. The prayer was very appropriate to the occasion and the circumstances of the preachers, just on the eve of being assigned to new pastoral charges, with all their implied labor, self-denial

and cross-bearing. Fully did the ministers seem to enter into the spirit of the Bishop's prayer, and fervent were their responses. The prayer being ended, the Bishop arose and, in substance, delivered the following address to the Conference:

"You are too well informed, brethren, as to what is implied in a Divine call to preach the Gospel, and as to your various duties as ministers of Christ, to make it necessary for me to detain you with many remarks. I wish only to call your attention to a few leading thoughts connected with your great work, which may lead you to be more systematic in performing it, and ensure you greater success. But, first, let me notice the sublime spectacle which presents itself before us at this moment. Here are more than one hundred men who acknowledge themselves called of God to preach the everlasting Gospel, and who profess a willingness to spend and be spent in this glorious work, and a readiness to go anywhere in the performance of it, at any required sacrifice of comfort or interest, that may be deemed necessary. Such a sublime spectacle is not seen elsewhere on earth, except in connection with our itinerant system of preaching the Gospel. You have but lately closed the toils and triumphs of the past year, and now you are ready to enter upon those of another, not knowing yet where you are to labor, but ready to labor in any field where your elder brethren, in their godly judgment, have thought it best for you to go. We have fixed your appointments, brethren, after prayerful deliberation over every case. We have studied the interests of the Church in connection with your personal interests, and we have endeavored to unite them into one as

far as possible. Your positions will all be honorable, but it must be confessed that some of you are called to peculiar honors—I mean the honor of sacrificing more, laboring more, and it may be suffering more than your brethren. But carry with you for your encouragement the precious promise, ‘every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor,’ so that if you are ‘in labors more abundant,’ so will be your reward. If you should be sent to what is called a hard circuit, strive to improve it, that it may become an easy one for your successor. It is not necessary for me to call your attention to your various duties in detail, as they are so plainly laid down in our Book of Discipline and in your solemn ordination vows. Refresh your memories with them often, by reading them over deliberately and prayerfully. I wish, however, to call your attention to a few things which I deem of much importance.

“First—‘The world is our parish,’ as the great and good John Wesley once had occasion to say. Our great aim is ‘to reform this continent and to spread Scriptural holiness all over these lands.’ Ours is professedly an aggressive warfare against the dominions of sin and Satan. We should, therefore, be determined to go into every nook and corner of the land in quest of precious souls. Do not allow yourselves to believe that because our Baptist, Presbyterian or Episcopalian brethren have had peaceable possession of a given district of country for a generation or more that there is nothing there for you to do. They have never yet been instrumental in the conversion of all the people—in many instances not half—in too many less than a fourth. This being the

case, you should go to their assistance, not to intermeddle with their success in winning souls to Christ, but to seek and save such as are not, and perhaps never will be, saved through their instrumentality. It may be that there are many individuals, or even whole families, in those regions anxiously waiting the advent of the Methodist ministry, and who would enter our Church in preference to any other, if they had one within a reasonable distance. Then make your arrangements to take in all such places as additional preaching places in your circuits until you get enough for an additional circuit. By so doing, while you build up a Church of your own denomination, you may greatly benefit other churches by provoking them to increased zeal and good works.

“Secondly—As an effective means of disseminating the doctrines and Church polity which we conscientiously believe to be strictly Scriptural, keep on hand a good supply of our denominational books and tracts, and sell them to the people everywhere at our low catalogue prices; and where they are not able or willing to buy, and yet may be persuaded to read them, ask those of your charge who are able to furnish you with means to purchase books, and especially tracts, for gratuitous distribution, particularly among the young people whose parents are either too careless, too bigoted or too wicked to provide in this way for the intellectual and spiritual wants of their children. In this way you may remodel or create the religious opinions of whole families, perhaps whole communities. Earnestly recommend the heads of families connected with our Church to take regularly one or more of our Church Periodicals, and

be careful in collecting and forwarding their subscriptions. All these items are attended to by our sister denominations, and unless we diligently do the same we shall lose immensely both in numbers and influence. Then let every one of you attend carefully and systematically to all these matters.

"Thirdly—Another very important item in order to ministerial success is, that of methodical pastoral visiting. Now, brethren, please understand me in this matter. I do not mean, on the one hand, mere social visiting in order to spend an hour or so in desultory, common-place conversation, for the purpose of showing the people what a clever companion you are capable of being notwithstanding your clerical profession; nor, on the other hand, to misrepresent a pure Bible Christianity by too much austerity and dogmatism. While you avoid jesting and frivolity, let the light of a cheerful countenance, coupled with a chaste and religious conversation, be your recommendation to the hearts of the people. You should let your congregations know that you are ready to visit their sick and bury their dead with appropriate religious services whenever it is desirable on their part. Do not conclude, because certain families have not hitherto been visited by Methodist ministers, that a visit would be unacceptable. If they are within the range of your pastoral work, give them a call, as by so doing you may be able to determine whether to continue your visits or not. If this useful branch of ministerial labor is ever attended to in such families, some one must begin it, and why not you? If, however, you should visit families, in your proper character as a minister of Christ, for the sole purpose

of benefitting them spiritually, and they should treat you unkindly or repulse you rudely, you may consider yourself excused from another visit, unless you are satisfied of a change for the better on their part. ‘He that receiveth you receiveth me,’ says the Savior, and where His ministers are not welcome the Master himself would be rejected; and you may not visit where your Lord and Master would not be received. It is not to be expected that a minister should spend much of his forenoons in pastoral visiting when he has to make preparation for preaching and other public religious exercises; but in the afternoon, by dining with one family and spending the evening with another, with such intermediate calls as you may be able to make, you may visit most of even a large charge during the year; and this systematic pastoral visiting will afford you many additional opportunities for putting into circulation the literature of the Church.

“Fourthly—The judicious and faithful administration of our Disciplinary Rules is another subject to which I invite your special attention. As to the spirit and manner of doing this I need give you no further advice than is found embraced in ‘the duties of those who have charge of circuits.’ ‘Enforce vigorously, but calmly, all the rules of the Society.’ This is all important to the purity and permanent prosperity of the Church. Of course you can not enforce the rules without the concurrence and co-operation of the Church; but that, as a general rule, you will have if you but do your duty and take the lead as you should in this matter. I more generally hear the members complaining of their pastors for neglecting the wholesome administration of

Discipline than I hear the pastors complaining of the want of the co-operation of the Church. As many an army has been demoralized and many a battle lost for the want of good discipline, so has the Church, from the same cause, been greatly weakened and her purposes defeated.

“Fifthly—You should, also, brethren, give due attention to all the subordinate agencies of the Church for carrying out our great purpose of raising up a holy people. Establish and encourage the weekly prayer-meetings in every Church; see that the Sunday Schools are properly organized, officered and well supplied with books; and attend promptly to all our missionary interests, by bringing the subject promptly before your congregations at least once in the year and taking up a collection for missionary purposes.

“Finally, my brethren, let me remind you that your first and greatest duty is to ‘preach the Gospel, not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.’ ‘The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.’ And whatever else you must leave but partially attended to for the want of time, you must not neglect to preach the Gospel zealously and faithfully. And in order to preach intelligently and successfully, you must secure sufficient time from all other claims to study the Gospel in all its Scriptural phases, that you may indeed become able ministers of the New Testament. May the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all and give you abundant success!”

At the conclusion of this short but appropriate address, which was delivered with much emphasis and

feeling, the Bishop opened his portfolio and announced his readiness to read the appointments. The ministers who had been in charge the previous year were requested to have their plans in hand, to be transferred to their successors; and, in order to attend to the exchange of plans without confusion, several brethren were requested to stand at convenient places to receive and transfer them to the newly-appointed pastors. These plans contain the number of preaching places in each charge; the days and hours for regular preaching; the distance from one preaching place to another; the number of white and colored members and probationers in each Church; the names of all the official members, with their grade of office and where to be found; and sometimes even the families where the preacher may stay at night on his first round. These various statistics and items contained in the plans gives the newly-appointed pastor a correct general view of his field of labor, so that he can enter upon it at once and commence at the right place.

All ears were now open and all eyes turned toward the Bishop as he read over slowly the name of each District, circuit, station and mission, with the name of the newly-appointed preacher, or preachers, appended. Quite a number of the preachers commenced penciling down the appointments as they were announced, but many of them ceased as soon as their own destiny was made known. They seemed at once to become abstracted from everything else and filled with thoughts about their new charge. The Presiding Elders in the meantime quietly put into the hands of each of their preachers in charge a slip of paper containing the *time*

of their first quarterly meeting—the *place* having been fixed by the last Quarterly Conference of the preceding year—so that it could be announced as soon as the preacher got to the circuit. Ours is indeed a methodical system in all its details, as well as general plans, and, when properly carried out, it is the most effective plan for spreading the Gospel now on earth. The older preachers received their appointments with perfect composure, having become accustomed to it by many years' service in the itinerancy; but some of the juniors manifested a good deal of perturbation. One of the newly-admitted class—Samuel Rowland—who had traveled six months on a good circuit the preceding year, in the employment of the Presiding Elder, and who was anxious to be returned to the same work, heard his name announced in connection with a new mission on the frontiers, with a strange name heretofore unknown on the minutes. He seemed for the moment to lose all self-control and, turning to those near him, with a flushed face and tremulous voice, inquired if they knew where that mission could be found? He would not object to going there, if it were possible to find the place; but he knew nothing about it—had never heard of such a place in his life. The brethren told him to be quiet until the Bishop got through and then his Presiding Elder would tell him where to find it. “And who is my Presiding Elder?” he inquired, earnestly. “They have taken me away from the one I had last year.” “Brother Howe,” was the reply. With much apparent exertion he made out to restrain his feelings and keep his seat until we were dismissed, then hastening to me he anxiously inquired: “Brother

Howe, where on earth is that mission you have sent me to? If I can find the way there, I am willing to go and do the best I can. How far is it from here?" I answered, "near two hundred miles." "Near two hundred miles!" he repeated. "And I must travel all that lonely distance among strangers, and at the end of my journey find myself among strangers still!" and the tears trickled down his youthful cheeks. "You take an extreme view of your difficulties, Brother Rowland," said I. "I shall live within half a day's ride of your mission, and hope to have the pleasure of your company at my house often. You will accompany some of the brethren to the vicinity of your mission, and then, by their direction, you can proceed to your first preaching place. You will find some good Methodist families settled all through your work, including several local preachers. The reason we place it on the list of missions is, because the country has been but recently settled by a sparse population, and they, having to divide what little they have made with later immigrants, are not yet in a condition to be a self-supporting circuit. I expect to be up soon to hold your first quarterly meeting and to organize your Quarterly Conference, and will spend some time with you traveling through the new settlements and looking after the scattered sheep of the house of Israel." With these remarks his countenance brightened up and he exclaimed, "Now I am satisfied. Where are the brethren with whom I am to perform the journey? My horse is hitched to the fence, and I have got my little all with me and can start in a minute." I introduced him to his company, and in a few minutes they were on their way.

Another modest, but very pious and promising young man, who had traveled two years, and whose appointment was announced in the vicinity of Cherryville, with a countenance radiant with joy exclaimed, after we were dismissed, "I can scarcely realize my agreeable disappointment. As I am not confined by any local ties, I expected to be sent to the very jumping-off place; but, instead of that, I have a circuit not over half a day's ride from Cherryville. I am ready to start, and I will go right to Brother Hayden's, one of my class-leaders, to-night, and then I will be at home and ready to fill my first appointment next Sabbath."

After the announcement of the appointments and a motion for final adjournment was made and carried, the Bishop gave out, instead of the usual Doxology, the last verse of the 892d Hymn :

"Together let us sweetly live,  
Together let us die;  
And each a starry crown receive,  
And reign above the sky,"

which was sung in thrilling tones to the tune of Balerma. The Benediction was then pronounced, which was followed by such commotion for a few minutes as is seldom seen in a church. The members in Cherryville, and from the various circuits in the vicinity, rushed forward to get an introduction to their new pastor, and to invite him to go home with them, or to call on them at his earliest convenience. The preachers hastily grasped each others' hands and said, "farewell, brother!" with an emphasis seldom heard elsewhere. Several who had labored together the previous year, and who were now to be separated, literally fell on each others' necks and wept at parting. In a few minutes,

however, all was over. The ministers collected themselves into companies of from two to a dozen and hied away on their journeys toward their homes or new circuits. The vast congregation, too, moved off in every direction. The Conference jubilee was over, and all had other duties to perform. If we each will act our part well, we all shall meet again—if not on earth, in heaven.

## E R R A T A .

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For "Jacob Dolgey" read "Joab Dodgey" in the following places: in Contents, on page 5, fourth line from bottom; Contents, page 6, first line of chapter VI; page 74, second line of contents; page 75, thirteenth line from top, page 76, eleventh line from bottom; page 277, seventh line in contents of chapter.

On page 11, eighth line from top, read "annual" for "quadrennial."

On page 24, ninth line from top, read "Black's Peak" for "Black Peak."

On page 30, seventh line from bottom, read "year" for "yea."

On page 31, ninth line from bottom, read "oil" for "aid."

On page 36, sixth line from top, read "alive" for "alike."

On page 40, eighth and ninth lines from top, read "meetin'" for "meetin."

On page 41, second line from bottom, read "Arminianism" for "Armenianism."

On page 43, fourteenth line from bottom, leave out surplus "and."

On page 44, eighth line from top, put capital "S" to "Spirit."

On page 47, fourth line from bottom, at beginning of line, read "post-town" for "post-office."

On page 55, sixth line from bottom, put an "?" after hands.

On page 56, seventh line from bottom, read "Reedum" for "Redum."

On page 58, fourth line from bottom, read "can" after Methodist.

On page 71, second line from bottom, read "me" after keep.

On page 85, eleventh line from top, leave surplus "1" out of calling.

On page 97, twelfth line from top, put " " instead of " " after work.

On page 104, eleventh line from bottom, read "Fagan" for "Fagin."

On page 104, fifth line from bottom, read "everything" for "everthing."

On page 105, seventh line from top, read "Fagan" for "Fagin."

On page 121, fourth line from bottom, read "into" for "in."

On page 133, fifteenth line from top, read "Clarkson" for "Carkson."

On page 165, eighth line from bottom, read "the" after "of."

On page 170, fourth line from top, leave "ed" off "wished."

On page 180, twelfth line from bottom, put a " " after "them."

On page 182, fourth line from bottom, leave out "in" after "through."

On page 200, second line from bottom, read "living with" instead of "belonging to."

On page 202 first and second lines from bottom, read "radical" for "abolition."

On page 209, tenth line from bottom, read "to" after "us."

On page 241, fifth line from bottom, read "the" after "of."

On page 257, sixteenth line from bottom, read "Presbyterian" for "Presbyterian."

On page 266, twelfth line from bottom, read "breast" for "heart."

On page 266, sixth line from bottom, read "year's" for "day's."

On page 322, seventh line from bottom, read "our" for "its."

On page 331, fourth line from top, read "shall" for "shal."

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